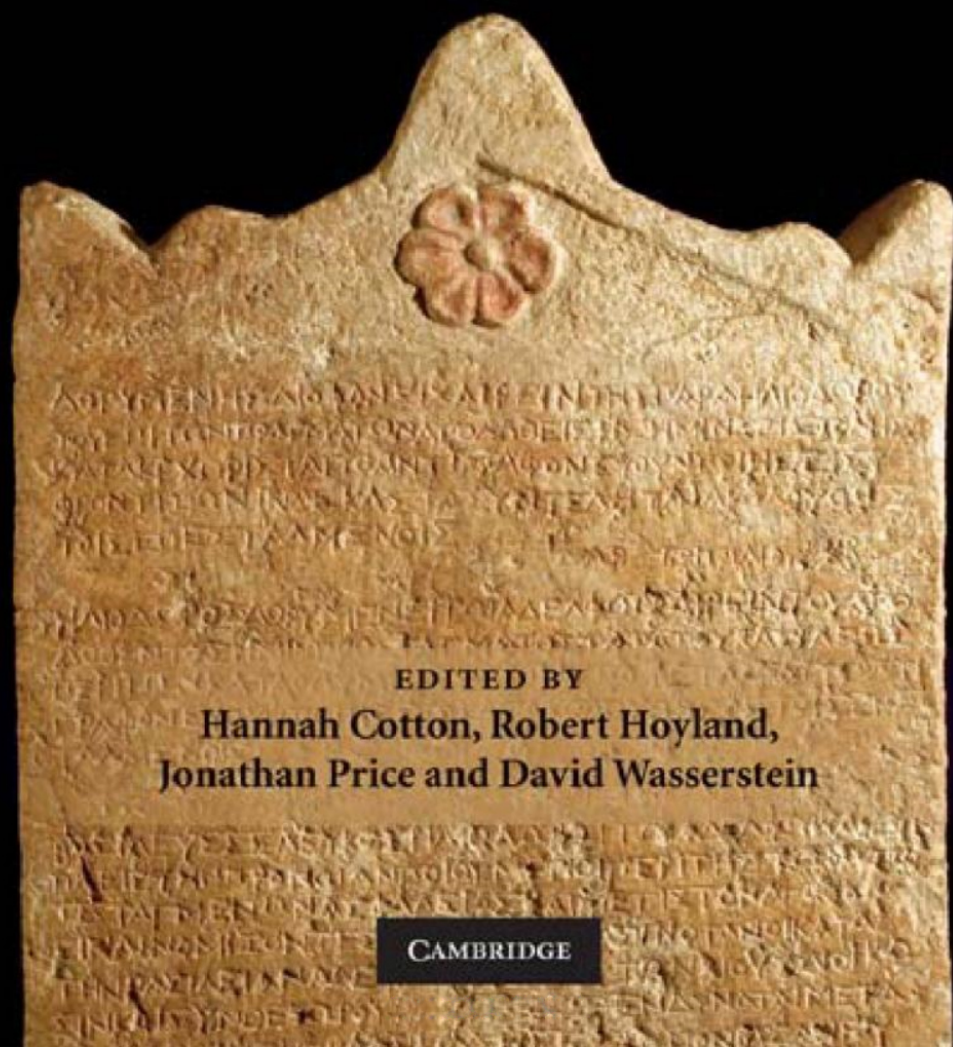


From Hellenism to Islam

Cultural and Linguistic Change
in the Roman Near East



EDITED BY

Hannah Cotton, Robert Hoyland,
Jonathan Price and David Wasserstein

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FROM HELLENISM TO ISLAM

The 800 years between the first Roman conquests and the conquest of Islam saw a rich, constantly shifting blend of languages and writing systems, legal structures, religious practices and beliefs in the Near East. While the different ethnic groups and cultural forms often clashed with each other, adaptation was as much a characteristic of the region as conflict. This volume, emphasising the inscriptions in many languages from the Near East, brings together mutually informative studies by scholars in diverse fields. Together, they reveal how the different languages, peoples and cultures interacted, competed with, tried to ignore or were influenced by each other, and how their relationships evolved over time. The volume will be of great value to those interested in Greek and Roman history, Jewish history and Near Eastern studies.

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*Cultural and Linguistic Change
in the Roman Near East*

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HANNAH M. COTTON
ROBERT G. HOYLAND
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Preface

This book is devoted to processes of continuity and change over the thousand years which separate Alexander the Great from Muhammad the Prophet – two men perceived as instrumental in changing the linguistic and cultural map of the Middle East, the former responsible for the spread of Greek, the latter for the demise of Greek and the rise of Arabic. Obviously the reality is not so simple, and the main purpose of this book is to examine the finer details and complexities of the relationship between languages and cultures during this period, and also to offer some account of the variety of responses that Greek, and other languages, evoked in the peoples of that area from Greece (and Rome) eastwards to Iran.

Like many other collective works, this book too has its own history. It grew out of the success of a conference, and the conference itself out of the experience of the editors as leaders and participants in a year-long research group at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2002–3. The group was led by Hannah M. Cotton (of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Jonathan J. Price (of Tel Aviv University) and David J. Wasserstein (then of Tel Aviv University, now of Vanderbilt University); the other members were Leah Di Segni and Shlomo Naeh (of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Robert G. Hoyland (then of Oxford University, now of the University of St Andrews), E. Axel Knauf (of Bern University), Marijana Riel (of the University of Belgrade) and Seth Schwartz (of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York).

The theme of our work at the Institute was ‘Greeks, Romans, Jews and Others in the Near East from Alexander to Muhammad: “A Civilization of Epigraphy”’, echoing Louis Robert’s definition of the Greco-Roman civilisation there. Engagement in inscriptions offered itself as a gateway to larger issues, especially languages and cultures and the interrelationships between them in the immensely varied worlds ruled by speakers of

Latin and Greek and inhabited by those others whom they dominated, or tried to, between Alexander and Muhammad.

These concerns were in themselves a natural outgrowth of the ongoing international project known as the *Corpus inscriptionum Iudaeae-Palaestinae* (CIIP), three of whose editors were members of our research group. The CIIP is an attempt to create a comprehensive multilingual corpus of all inscriptions, both published and unpublished, from the fourth century BCE to the seventh century CE, from the territories of Israel and Palestine, where, as the many surviving written documents attest, the local languages and cultures pre-dating the arrival of the Greeks and Romans proved tenacious and potent and remained vital and vibrant under Greek and Roman rule. Here, more than anywhere else, it becomes evident that the richness of the epigraphic tradition comes fully into its own only when epigraphic texts in different languages, the contemporaneous expressions of different but related cultures, are studied together.

The highlight of the year, the culmination of our weekly seminars attended by ever-increasing numbers of people, was a three-day conference, held on 29 June–2 July 2003, under the title ‘Epigraphy and Beyond: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Near East from Hellenism to Islam’. Scholars from France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States took part. The enthusiasm of those present, and the quality of many of the papers delivered there, encouraged us to think about a book on the theme, and this volume is the result. It contains a number of papers from the conference, all of them revised in the light of the discussions in Jerusalem and comments by the readers for Cambridge University Press, as well as several additional papers that we solicited from scholars who had not participated in our group or in the conference. Our aim in editing this volume has thus been not to offer yet another miscellaneous collection of variegated conference papers, but rather to make a distinctive contribution to an area of scholarly interest that has been growing in recent years. In inviting Fergus Millar to write an introduction for us we have sought deliberately both to obtain the imprimatur of that scholar whose contributions to this field have been the richest and the most thought-provoking and – perhaps inevitably – by asking him to read and in effect to comment on its contents, to obtain his reactions to the contributions themselves.

Many bodies and individuals have contributed to the making of this book. First, we wish to thank the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem for hosting both our Research Group in 2002–3 and the conference in 2003. Without the generous support and commitment of the Institute

and its staff, continuing through to the preparation of this volume for the press, nothing would have been possible. It is a pleasure to thank here Benjamin Kedar, then the Director of the Institute, as well as Penina Feldman, its Administrative Director, Shani Freiman, Semadar Danziger, Batya Matalov, Dalia Aviely, Ofer Arbeli, Hanoch Kalimian, and, last but not least, Shoshana Yazdi, our cook, whose Afghan cooking delighted us all over many months.

Our group benefited during the year also from the services of a research assistant, Ariadne Konstantinou. Thanks to the Institute she was able to work for us in the preparation of the volume for the press as well. We owe her much.

We are most grateful to Tanya Tolubayev for her assiduous and meticulous help with collating the proofs of the authors and the editors.

Formal acknowledgement is due to Gabi Laron and the Israel Museum for granting us permission to reproduce the two inscriptions which appear on the dust jacket and inside the book.¹

These two inscriptions encapsulate in more ways than one the theme of the book, continuity and change. The ‘memorial epigraphy’, so well described by Werner Eck in the opening chapter, survived the gap of more than 900 years which separate the two inscriptions from each other. Both inscriptions testify to the chain of command in a world empire in which the ruler channels his orders through his local representatives. In both, those representatives display the order in the public sphere in the language of power, whether in Greek in the case of a Seleucid king acting through his viceroy, the infamous Heliodorus, then present in the satrapy of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē, or in Arabic in the case of the Servant of Allāh (*‘abd allāh*) Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik, Commander of the Faithful, the Umayyad Caliph, acting through his governor Ishāq b. Qabīsa. As for change, this is more obvious, and striking: a new language, Arabic, and a different style of rule, by a ‘Commander of the Faithful’. The change is as yet still fresh: just a few miles away, in modern Hammat Gader (ancient Gadara), another building inscription (alluded to in Leah Di Segni’s paper) attests an earlier ‘Commander of the Faithful’, Mu‘awiya ibn Abi Sufyan (660–80), who restored the baths there, again following the convention of naming the chain of command for the execution of the task, but this time in Greek. Mu‘awiya was a very nouveau ruler, and

¹ Cf. Hannah M. Cotton and Michael Wörle, ‘Seleukos IV to Heliodoros. A New Dossier of Royal Correspondence from Israel’, *ZPE* 159, 2007: 191–205 and Elias Khamis, ‘Two Wall Mosaic Inscriptions from the Umayyad Market Place in Bet Shean/Baysān’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 64.2, 2001: 159–76. For text and translation of the two inscriptions see pp. xviii–xx.

he followed standard practice in using Greek. But this practice was dispensed with very dramatically a few years later, again not so far away, in Jerusalem, by the 'Commander of the Faithful' 'Abd al-Malik in his long mosaic inscription on the Dome of the Rock, and thenceforth, as the Bet Shean/Baysân inscription illustrates, this would become the norm for the monumental epigraphy of the Middle East.

Finally, we are grateful to Michael Sharp, at the Press, whose encouragement kept us going from the inception of this project and enabled us to see it through to completion, and to Clare Zon and Muriel Hall, our copy-editors, whose sharp eyes and shrewdness saved us from a host of errors. Last but not least we thank Eloise Dicker and Sarah Waidler for producing so efficiently the indispensable index.

H.M.C.

R.G.H.

J.J.P.

D.J.W.

THE INSCRIPTIONS

- Δορυμένης Διοφάνει
χαίρειν· τῆς παρὰ Ἡλιοδ-
ώρου τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγ-
μάτων ἀποδοθείσης ἡμῖν
ἐπιστολῆς κατακεχώρ-
ισται τὸ ἀντίγραφον. Εὖ
4 οὖν ποιήσεις φροντίζων
ἵνα ἕκαστα συντελῇται
ἀκολούθως τοῖς ἐπεσταλ-
μένοις.
(Ἔτους) δλρ'
Γορπιαίου κβ'
- Δορυμένης Διοφάνει
χαίρειν· τῆς παρὰ Ἡλιοδ-
ώρου τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγ-
μάτων ἀποδοθείσης ἡμῖν
ἐπιστολῆς κατακεχώρ-
ισται τὸ ἀντίγραφον. Εὖ
8 οὖν ποιήσεις φροντίζων
ἵνα ἕκαστα συντελῇται
ἀκολούθως τοῖς ἐπεσταλ-
μένοις.
(Ἔτους) δλρ'
Γορπιαίου κβ'
- Ἡλιοδώρος Δορυμένει τῷ
ἀδελφῷ χαίρειν· τοῦ ἀπο-
δοθέντος ἡμῖν προστάγ-
ματος παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως
περὶ τῶν κατὰ Ὀλυμπι-
όδωρον ὑποτέτακται τὸ
ἀντίγραφον. Εὖ οὖν
ποιήσεις κατακολουθήσας
τοῖς ἐπεσταλμένοις.
12 (Ἔτους) δλρ'
Γορπιαίου κγ{'
- Βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος
Ἡλιοδώρῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ
χαίρειν· πλείστην
πρόνοιαν ποιούμενοι περὶ
τῆς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων
ἀσφαλείας καὶ μέγιστον
16 ἀγαθὸν εἶναι νομίζοντες
- Dorymenes to Diophanes greet-
ings. The copy of the letter
handed over to us by Heliodoros
who is in charge of the affairs is
enclosed. You will do well there-
fore if you take care that every-
thing is carried out according to
the instructions.
Year 134 (i.e. 178 BCE),
22 of the month of Gorpaios
- Heliodoros to Dorymenes his
brother greetings. The copy of
the order by the king concerning
Olympiodoros handed over to
us is placed below. You will do
well therefore if you follow the
instructions.
Year 134, after 22 of the
month of Gorpaios
- King Seleukos to Heliodoros
his brother greetings. Taking
the utmost consideration for
the safety of our subjects, and
thinking it to be of the greatest
good for the affairs in our realm
when those living in our kingdom

- τοῖς πράγμασιν, ὅταν
οἱ κατὰ τὴν βασιλείαν
ἀδεῶς τοὺς ἑαυτῶν
βίους διοικῶσιν, καὶ
συνθεωροῦντες, ὥς οὐθὲν
δύναται μεταλαμβάνειν
τῆς καθηκούσης εὐδαι-
μονίας ἄνευ
20 τῆς τῶν θεῶν εὐμ<ε>νείας,
ἵνα μὲν τὰ καθιδρυμένα
κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας σατρα-
πείας ἱερὰ τὰς πατρίο[υς]
κομίζεται τιμὰς μετὰ τῆς
ἁρμοζούσης θεραπ[είας],
[ἐ]ξ ἀρχῆς τυγχάνομεν
τεταγμένοι, τῶν δὲ κ[ατὰ]
24 [Κο]ίλ<η>ν Συρίαν καὶ
Φοινίκην πραγμάτων
οὐκ ἐ[χόντων] [τὸν τα]
σσύμενον πρὸς τῇ τούτων
ἐπιμελ[είαι - c. 6 -]
-----μεν ὅτι σωφρόνως
πρὸς τῇ[ν-----]
-----των Ὀλυμπι-
όδωρος-----
28 -----κήψεως ΕΚΤ-----

manage their lives without fear,
and at the same time realising that
nothing can enjoy its fitting pros-
perity without the good will of
the gods, from the outset we have
made it our concern to ensure
that the sanctuaries founded in
the other satrapies receive the
traditional honours with the care
befitting them. But since the
affairs in Koilē Syria and Phoinikē
stand in need of appointing
someone to take care of these [i.e.
sanctuaries]... Olympiodoros...

In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate
 the Merciful. Ordered this
 building the servant of Allāh (*‘Abd Allāh*)
 Hishām, Commander of the Faithful,
 [to be built] by the governor Ishāq
 bin Qabīṣa (completed in ?) the year
 [] and one hundred

بسم الله الرحمن
 الرحيم امر بهذ
 ا البنيان عبد الله
 هشام امير المؤمنين
 على يدي الامير اسحق
 بن قبيصة وفي/ى؟ سنة
 [] ومئة

Abbreviations

All classical abbreviations other than those listed below are from the *OCD* or *OLD*, journal abbreviations are from *L'Année épigraphique* and papyri abbreviations are from the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*.

<i>ADAJ</i>	Annual of the Department of Antiquities in Jordan. Amman
Adams <i>Bilingualism</i>	Adams, J. N. (2003) <i>Bilingualism and the Latin Language</i> . Cambridge.
Adams, Janse and Swain <i>Bilingualism</i>	Adams, J. N., Janse, M. and Swain, S. (eds.) (2002) <i>Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Word</i> . Oxford.
<i>AE</i> or <i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i> .
<i>AM</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i> .
Ameling <i>Kleinasien</i>	Ameling, W. (ed.) (2004) <i>Inscriptiones Iudaicae Orientis</i> vol. II: <i>Kleinasien</i> . Tübingen.
<i>ANRW</i>	Temporini, H. and Haase, W. (eds.) (1972–) <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> . Berlin and New York.
<i>ArchPF</i>	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
<i>BAGN</i>	Stiehl, R. and Stier, H. E. (eds.) (1969–1970) <i>Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben. Festschrift für Franz Altheim zum 6.10.1968</i> . 2 vols. Berlin.
Bagnall <i>Egypt</i>	Bagnall, R. S. (1993) <i>Egypt in Late Antiquity</i> . Princeton, New Jersey.
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i> .

<i>BGU</i>	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin. Griechische Urkunden.</i>
<i>BKU</i>	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Koeniglichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin. Koptische Urkunden.</i>
<i>BM Or.</i>	Lane-Poole, S. (1875–90) <i>Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum.</i> London.
<i>BMC Pal.</i>	Hill, G. F. (1914) <i>Catalogue of Greek Coins of Palaestina in the British Museum.</i> London.
<i>BMCR</i>	Mattingly, H. (1966) <i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> vol. III: Nerva to Hadrian. London.
Bowersock <i>Arabia</i>	Bowersock, G. W. (1983) <i>Roman Arabia.</i> Cambridge, Mass. and London.
Bowersock <i>Hellenism</i>	Bowersock, G. W. (1990) <i>Hellenism in Late Antiquity.</i> Ann Arbor, Mich.
<i>CCID</i>	Hörig, M. and Schwertheim, E. (1987) <i>Corpus cultus Iovis Dolicheni.</i> Leiden.
<i>CCL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina.</i>
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum.</i>
<i>CII</i> or <i>CIJ</i>	Frey, J.-B. (1936–52) <i>Corpus inscriptionum Iudaicarum: Recueil des inscriptions juives qui vont du IIIe siècle avant Jésus-Christ au VIIe siècle de notre ère</i> , vols. I–II. Rome.
<i>CIIP</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Iudaeae-Palestinae.</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum.</i>
<i>CIMRM</i>	Vermaseren, M. J. (1956–60) <i>Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis Mithriacae.</i> The Hague.
<i>CIS</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Semiticarum.</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal.</i>
Cotton, Cockle, Millar ‘Papyrology’	Cotton, H. M., Cockle, W. E. H. and Millar, F. G. B. (1995) ‘The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey’, <i>JRS</i> 85: 214–35.
<i>CPG</i>	<i>Corpus papyrorum Graecarum.</i>
<i>CPJ</i>	<i>Corpus papyrorum Iudaicarum</i> I–III.
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Corpus papyrorum Latinarum.</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Corpus papyrorum Raineri.</i> Vienna.
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.</i>

- CSNS Clark, V.S. (1979) 'A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan.' Unpublished PhD thesis. Melbourne.
- CTh* *Codex Theodosianus*.
- D-H Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac*.
- DAGR* Daremberg, Ch., Saglio E. (ed.) and Pottier, E. (1877–1916) *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*. Paris.
- Dieleman *Priests* Dieleman, J. (2005) *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London–Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100–300 CE)*. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 153. Leiden.
- Dirven *Palmyrenes* Dirven, L. (1999) *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria*. Leiden.
- Donceel-Voûte *Pavements* Donceel-Voûte, P. (1988) *Les pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban*. Louvain-la-Neuve.
- Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac* Drijvers, H. J. W. and Healey, J. F. (1999) *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osroene: Texts, Translations, and Commentary*. Leiden.
- EBGR* *Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion*. Kernos.
- EI*² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn.
- FD* Fouilles de Delphes.
- Feissel and Gascou 'Documents I' Feissel, D. and Gascou, J. (1995) 'Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate (III^e siècle après J.-C.), I. Les pétitions (P.Euphr. 1 à 5)', *JS* 65: 65–119.
- Feissel and Gascou 'Documents III' Feissel, D. and Gascou, J. (2000) 'Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate (III^e siècle après J.-C.) III. Actes divers et lettres (P.Euphr. 11 à 17)', *JS* 70: 157–208.
- Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor 'Documents II' Feissel, D., Gascou, J. and Teixidor, J. (1997) 'Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate (III^e siècle après J.-C.), II. Les actes de vente-achat (P.Euphr. 6 à 10)', *JS* 67: 3–57.

- FIRA* *Fontes iuris Romani antejustiniani*. 3 vols. Florence, 1940–3.
- GIBM* Newton, C. T. *et al.* (eds.) (1874–1916) *The Collection of Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum*. Oxford.
- Hackl, Jenni and Schneider *Quellen* Hackl, U., Jenni, H. and Schneider, Ch. (2003) *Quellen zur Geschichte der Nabatäer*. NTOA 51. Freiburg and Göttingen.
- Hadad *Oil Lamps* Hadad, S. (2002) *The Oil Lamps from the Hebrew University Excavations at Bet Shean*. Qedem Reports 4. Jerusalem.
- Hatra Aggoula, B. (1991) *Inventaire des inscriptions hatréennes*. Paris.
- Healey *Tomb Inscriptions* Healey, J. (1993) *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Mada'in Salih*. *Journal of Semitic Studies*, supplement 1. Oxford.
- Hillers and Cussini *Palmyrene* Hillers, D. R. and Cussini, E. (1996) *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*. Baltimore, Maryland and London.
- Hoftijzer and Jongeling *North-West Semitic* Hoftijzer, J. and Jongeling, K. (1995) *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*. 2 vols. Leiden.
- Hoyland *Islam* Hoyland, R. G. (1997) *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it*. Princeton, New Jersey.
- I. Beroia* Gounaropoulou, L. and Hatzopoulos, M. B. (1998) *Ἐπιγραφές Κάτω Μακεδονίας (μεταξὺ τοῦ Βερμίου Ὄρους καὶ τοῦ Ἀξιῶ Ποταμοῦ). Τεύχος Α. Ἐπιγραφές Βεροίας*. Athens.
- I. Épidamne* Cabanes, P. and Drini, F. (1995) *Corpus des inscriptions grecques d'Illyrie méridionale et d'Épire* vol. I: Inscriptions d'Épidamne-Dyrrhachion et d'Apollonia. 1: Inscriptions d'Épidamne-Dyrrhachion. Athens and Paris.
- I. Leukopetra* Petsas, P. M., Hatzopoulos, M. B., Gounaropoulou, L. and Paschidis, P. (2000) *Inscriptions du sanctuaire de la Mère des Dieux autochthone de Leukopetra (Macédoine)*. Athens.
- I. Oropos* Petrakos, B. C. (1997) *Οἱ ἐπιγραφές τοῦ Ὠρωποῦ*. Athens.

<i>I.Salamis</i>	Mitford, T. B. and Nicolau, I. K. (1974) <i>The Greek and Latin Inscriptions from Salamis</i> . Nicosia.
<i>IDAM</i>	Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums.
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> .
<i>IGBulg</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae</i> .
<i>IGCVO</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae Christianae veteres occidentis</i> .
<i>IGLJ II</i>	Gatier, P. L. (1986) <i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie: Inscriptions de la Jordanie</i> vol. 2: Région centrale. Paris.
<i>IGLS</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i> .
<i>IGR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes</i> .
<i>IGRRP</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes</i> .
<i>IGrSic. et inf. It.</i>	Ruiz, V. A. and Olivieri, A. (eds.) (1925) <i>Inscriptiones graecae Siciliae et infimae Italiae ad ius pertinentes</i> . Milan.
<i>IGUR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae urbis Romae</i> .
<i>IJudOr</i>	<i>IJudOr I</i> = Noy, D., Panayotov, A. and Bloedhorn, H. (eds.) <i>Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis</i> vol. I: Eastern Europe. <i>IJudOr II</i> = Ameling, W. (ed.) <i>Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis</i> vol. II: <i>Kleinasien</i> . <i>IJudOr III</i> (= Syr) = Noy, D. and Bloedhorn, H. (eds.) <i>Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis</i> vol. III: <i>Syria and Cyprus</i> .
<i>IK</i>	<i>Inchriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien</i> .
<i>ILCV</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae christianae veteres</i> .
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae I–III</i> .
<i>IosPE I²</i>	Latyshev, B. (ed.) (1916) <i>Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini graecae et latinae</i> . Petrograd.
<i>Isaac Near East</i>	Isaac, B. (1998) <i>The Near East under Roman Rule: Selected Papers</i> . Leiden.
<i>Jamhara</i>	Ibn al-Kalbī (1966) <i>Jamharat al-nasab</i> . vol. I, ed. W. Caskell. Leiden.
<i>LA</i>	See <i>SBL</i>
<i>Levick Roman Colonies</i>	Levick, B. (1967) <i>Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor</i> . Oxford.
<i>LMLS</i>	Language Monography of the Linguistic Society (of America).

- LSAM* Sokolowski, F. (ed.) (1955) *Lois sacrées de l'Asie mineure*. Paris.
LSCG Sokolowski, F. (ed.) (1969) *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*. Paris.
 Magen, Misgav and Tsfania *Gerizim* Magen, Y., Misgav, H. and Tsfania, L. (2004) *Mount Gerizim Excavations* vol. I: The Aramaic, Hebrew and Samaritan Inscriptions. Jerusalem.
Malay Researches Malay, H. (1999) *Researches in Lydia, Mysia and Aiolis*. TAM, Ergänzungsband 23. Vienna.
MAMA *Monumenta Asiae Minoris antiqua*.
MEFRM *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Moyen Âge et temps modernes*
 Millar *Roman Near East* Millar, F. (1993) *The Roman Near East, 31 BC–AD 337*. Cambridge, Mass. and London.
NEAEHL Stern, E. (ed.) (1993–2008) *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* I–V. Jerusalem.
O.Brit.Mus.Copt. I = Hall, H. R. (ed.) (1905) *Coptic and Greek Texts of the Christian Period from Ostraka, Stelae, etc. in the British Museum*. London.
 II = Biedenkopf-Ziehner, A. (ed.) (2000) *Koptische Ostraka* vol. I: *Ostraka aus dem Britischen Museum in London*. Wiesbaden.
O.Crum Crum, W. E. (ed.) (1902) *Coptic Ostraca from the Collections of the Egypt Exploration Fund, the Cairo Museum and Others*. London.
O.CrumST Crum, W. E. (ed.) (1921) *Short Texts from Coptic Ostraca and Papyri*. Oxford.
O.Medin. Stefanski, E. and Lichtheim, M. (eds.)
HabuCopt. (1952) *Coptic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*. Chicago.
O.Petr. 'Ostraca in Prof. W. M. Flinders Petrie's Collection at University College, London', in *O.Bodl.* I: 82–152.
O.Vind.Copt. Till, W. C. (ed.) (1960) *Die koptischen Ostraka der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*. Vienna.
P.Apoll. Rémondon, R. (ed.) (1953) *Papyrus grecs d'Apollônios Anô*. Cairo.

- P.Bal.* Kahle, P.E. (ed.) (1954) *Bala'izah. Coptic Texts from Deir el-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt*. London.
- P.CLT* Schiller, A. A. (ed.) (1932) *Ten Coptic Legal Texts*. New York.
- P.Dura* Welles, C. B., Fink, R. O. and Gilliam J. F. (eds.) (1959) *The Excavations at Dura-Europos Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters*. Final Report V, Part I: The Parchments and Papyri. New Haven, Conn.
- P.Euphr.* Feissel and Gascou 'Documents I';
Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor 'Documents II';
Feissel and Gascou 'Documents III'.
- P.Euphr.Syr* Teixidor, J. (1990) 'Deux documents syriaques du IIIe siècle après J.-C. provenant du Moyen Euphrate', *CRAI*: 144–66.
Teixidor, J. (1991–2) 'Un document syriaque de fermage de 242 après J.-C.', *Semitica* 41/42: 195–208.
- P.Hever* Cotton, H. M. and Yardeni, A. (eds.) (1997) *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and Other Sites*. The Seiyāl Collection II; Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 27. Oxford.
- P.Köln* *Kölner Papyri*.
- P.KRU* Crum, W. E. (1912) *Koptische Rechtsurkunden des achten Jahrhunderts aus Djême (Theben)*. Leipzig.
- P.Lond.* *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*. London.
- P.Lond.Copt.* Crum, W. E. (ed.) (1905) *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London.
- P.Mich.* *Michigan Papyri*.
- P.Mon.Apollo* Clackson, S. J. (2000) *Coptic and Greek Texts Relating to the Hermopolite Monastery of Apa Apollo*. Oxford.
- P.Mon.Epiph.* Crum, W. E. and Evelyn White, H. G. (eds.) (1926) *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes*, part II. New York.
- P.Mur* Benoit, P., Milik, J. T. and de Vaux, R. (eds.) (1961) *Les grottes de Murabba'ât*. Oxford.

- P.Nessana* Kraemer, C. J. (ed.) (1958) *Excavations at Nessana (Auja Hafir, Palestine)* vol. III: Non-Literary Papyri. Princeton, New Jersey.
- P.Oxy* *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.
- P.Petra* *P.Petra* I = Frösén, J., Arjava, A. and Lehtinen, M. (eds.) (2002) *The Petra Papyri* vol. I. American Center of Oriental Research 4. Amman.
- P.Petra* III = Arjava, A., Buchholz, M. and Gagos, T. (eds.) (2007) *The Petra Papyri* vol. III. American Center of Oriental Research Publication 5. Amman.
- P.Qurra* Abbott, N. (1938) *The Kurrah Papyri from Aphroditto in the Oriental Institute*. Chicago.
- P.Ross. Georg.* *Papyri russischer und georgischer Sammlungen*. Tiflis.
- P.Ryl. Copt.* Crum, W. E. (1909) *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of the John Rylands Library*. Manchester.
- P.Sorb.* *Papyrus de la Sorbonne*.
- P.Tebt.* *The Tebtunis Papyri*. London.
- P.Yadin* Lewis, N. (1989) *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* vol. I: Greek Papyri. Judean Desert Studies 2. Jerusalem.
- P.Yadin* Yadin, Y., Greenfield, J. C., Yardeni, A. and Levine, B. (2002) *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* vol. II: Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabataean Documents. Judean Desert Studies 4. Jerusalem.
- PAES* Littmann, E., Magie, D. and Stuart, D. R. (eds.) (1904–21) *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria* III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions, A. Southern Syria. Leiden.
- Pap. dem.* *Papyrus démotique* (in Bibliothèque nationale, Paris).
- PAT* Hillers, D. R. and Cussini, E. (1996) *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*.

Pestman <i>Recueil</i>	Pestman, P. W. (1977) <i>Recueil de textes démotiques et bilingues</i> . Leiden.
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PGM	Preisendanz, K. (ed.) (1928–31) <i>Papyri graecae magicae</i> . 2 vols. Leipzig and Berlin.
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> .
Pollard <i>Soldiers</i>	Pollard, N. (2000) <i>Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria</i> . Ann Arbor, Mich.
PPolitIud	<i>Urkunden des Politeuma der Juden von Herakleopolis (144/3–133/2 v. Chr.) (P.Polit.Iud.): Papyri aus den Sammlungen von Heidelberg, Köln, München und Wien</i> , ed. James M.S. Cowey and Klaus Maresch, Wiesbaden, 2001.
PSI	<i>Papiri greci e latini: Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto</i> .
PSAS	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland</i>
QDAP	<i>The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine</i>
Rahmani <i>Ossuaries</i>	Rahmani, L. Y. (1994) <i>A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel</i> . Jerusalem.
RB, RBi	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RE	Pauly-Wissowa, <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> .
Rep.	M. Rostovtzeff et al. (eds.) (1929–52), <i>The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters. Preliminary Reports I–IX</i> . New Haven, Conn.
Richter <i>Rechtssemantik</i>	Richter, T. S. (2002) <i>Rechtssemantik und forensische Rhetorik. Untersuchungen zu Wortschatz, Stil und Grammatik der Sprache koptischer Rechtsurkunden</i> . Kanobos. Forschungen zum griechisch–römischen Ägypten 3. Leipzig.
RICIS	Bricault, L. (2005) <i>Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques</i> , Paris.

<i>RMD</i>	Roxan, M., Holder, P. (eds.) (1975–2006), <i>Roman Military Diplomas I–V</i> . London.
Rochette <i>Latin</i>	Rochette, B. (1997) <i>Le Latin dans le monde grec. Recherches sur la diffusion de la langue et des lettres latines dans les provinces hellénophones de l'Empire romain</i> . Brussels.
Sartre <i>Alexandre</i>	Sartre, M. (2001) <i>D'Alexandre à Zénobie. Histoire du Levant antique, IVe siècle av. J.-C. – IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.</i> Paris.
<i>SB</i>	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten</i> .
<i>SBL</i>	<i>Studi Biblici Franciscani Liber annuus</i>
Schürer, Vermes and Millar <i>History</i>	Schürer, E., Vermes, G. and Millar, F. (1973–87) <i>The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, 175B.C.–A.D.135 I–III</i> . Edinburgh.
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> .
<i>Syll.</i> ³	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum I–IV</i> ³ .
<i>Syr</i>	<i>IJudOr III</i> .
<i>TAM</i>	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i> .
Welles 'The Inscriptions'	Welles, C. B. (1938) 'The Inscriptions', in <i>Gerasa: City of the Decapolis</i> , ed. C.H. Kraeling. New Haven, Conn.
WH	Winnett, F. V. and Lankester Harding, G. (1978) <i>Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns</i> . Toronto.
<i>WZKM</i>	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
Yadin <i>Bar-Kokhba</i>	Yadin, Y. (1971) <i>Bar-Kokhba: The Rediscovery of the Legendary Hero of the Last Jewish Revolt against Imperial Rome</i> . Jerusalem.
Yadin, Greenfield, Yardeni and Levine <i>Documents</i>	Yadin, Y., Greenfield, J. C., Yardeni, A. and Levine, B. (2002) <i>The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters</i> vol. II. Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabataean Documents. Judean Desert Studies 4. Jerusalem.
Yardeni <i>Textbook</i>	Yardeni, A. (2000) <i>Textbook of Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabataean Documentary Texts from the Judaean Desert and Related Material I–II</i> . Jerusalem.
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

Introduction: documentary evidence, social realities and the history of language

Fergus Millar

Few collections of papers could claim to represent more emphatically than this one does a whole series of changes of focus which mark the evolution of ancient history over the last few decades. First, it is based almost entirely on documents, whether preserved on perishable materials or on stone; the literary texts transmitted in manuscript, and printed since the early modern period, on which our conceptions of the ancient world were previously based, have receded into the background. Second, its focus is on the eastern Mediterranean, taking the 'Near East' in a relatively broad sense, including both Anatolia and Egypt. Third, while not exploring Hellenism in the sense of the period between Alexander and Actium, it takes as its starting point the dominant Greek culture of the eastern Mediterranean under the Roman Empire. Fourth, its essential focus is on language – or co-existing or competing languages. That is to say both, on the one hand, that it explores the potential of original documents to represent for us the realities of the societies by and from which they were generated, and that, at the same time, it accepts always that a 'document' is, just like a literary text, a construct following rules and conventions – or obeying a 'rhetoric' of genre – and is not, and cannot be, a simple mirror of 'how it really was'. But the focus on language also means something more complex still, namely the situations which evolve when more than one language is (in some sense) current within a particular society. To take only the crudest of alternatives, if only one language is actually represented in the documentation available from a particular place and time, should we follow the principles of empiricism, and (at the weakest) adopt the working hypothesis that only that language was current? Or are we entitled to 'read' the available documents in the light of a presumption that some other language was normally spoken, but not written, or at least not used for the production of official public texts?

Finally, this volume is characterised above all, after two contrasting initial explorations of the role of Latin in the Greek East, by its focus

on the interplay of Greek with Semitic languages, whether Hebrew or various branches of Aramaic (Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, Samaritan Aramaic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic), with Egyptian (hieroglyphic, demotic or Coptic), with the languages and scripts of pre-Islamic Arabia, and finally with Arabic. This is therefore, obviously enough, to say that, beginning in the Greek world of the first three centuries CE, the volume is representative also of contemporary ancient history in incorporating late antiquity, and in taking this term as embracing the first couple of centuries of Islamic rule, both in Syria–Palestine and in Egypt.

It is entirely appropriate that this ambitious project should have been generated in Jerusalem, taking its origin from a conference at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University in 2003, and is edited by Hannah Cotton of the Hebrew University, Jonathan Price of Tel Aviv University, David Wasserstein, then of Tel Aviv and now of Vanderbilt University, and Robert Hoyland (St Andrews). In responding, more than willingly, to the invitation to contribute an introduction, I can claim absolutely no credit for the design or contents of the volume, but am happy to offer a response, or loose series of responses, to it, bringing in some related themes, referring to some relevant modern literature, and discussing a few of the many profound and difficult methodological issues which are raised. It will not be necessary here to rehearse the content of each of the papers, which speak powerfully for themselves (or even indeed to refer explicitly to all of them).

Given the significant emphasis throughout on relations between languages, where the methodological problems are explored most fully in Chapter 17 by Tonio Sebastian Richter, I would want to suggest that ‘bilingualism’, as found in the titles of two important recent works,¹ is not always an adequate concept to describe various aspects of the ‘language contact’ involved. *Individual* bilingualism is one thing, that is when an individual is in a position to ‘code-switch’ from one language to another, depending on the context. But even at the individual level, a person may be able to speak two (or more) languages, but be able to write none, or only one. Further, two languages may be current in a society, which necessarily involves the presence and activity of some individuals who are themselves bilingual. But this situation allows precisely for the *absence* of individual bilingualism in a large proportion of the population. For them to access the ‘other’ language, or to be accessed in their turn (say) by

¹ See Adams *Bilingualism*; Adams, Janse and Swain *Bilingualism*.

official pronouncements originally composed in it, a role of intermediaries or translators is required. I have suggested tentatively, in relation to the fifth-century 'Roman' Empire based in Constantinople, that 'dual-lingualism' might be a more appropriate term.² But even that does not cover situations where more than two languages are in use, or where there is an extensive importation of words and concepts from one language into another, or into more than one language.

Let us take for instance Latin in the Near East, treated in great detail, and in contrasting styles, in this volume by Werner Eck and Benjamin Isaac, with conflicting views as to whether the ever-increasing evidence for the public use of Latin in Caesarea does or does not show that there had been an initial settlement of Latin speakers when the city was re-founded by Vespasian as a *colonia*. Whatever language was actually spoken in a Near Eastern *colonia*, one side-effect was the seepage of Latin terms and concepts not only into Greek, but also (as similarly in Edessa) into Semitic languages. We see this in the case of a citizen of the *colonia* of Berytus (where there unquestionably had been veteran settlement) who is commemorated on an inscription in Palmyra:³

Μάρκος Ιούλιος Μάξιμος Ἀριστείδης, κόλων Βηρύτιος

MRQWS YWLYWS MKSMWS 'RSTYDS QWLWN BRTY'

But perhaps the most complex case of linguistic history, and the one which is particularly relevant to the most significant of all the historical questions raised in this volume, namely the background and effects of the Islamic conquests, is Petra, which comes into Benjamin Isaac's chapter as a nominal *colonia*, and into Hannah Cotton's as regards the question of whether elements of a local Nabataean law can still be found in the Petra papyri of the sixth century. Had the spoken language of the Nabataeans always been a Semitic language which can be identified as the ancestor of classical Arabic? That would mean that both the Nabataean Aramaic found not only in inscriptions from (above all) Petra itself and from Medain Saleh,⁴ but also in perishable legal documents from the later regal period (and from just after the Roman conquest), but also the Greek of sixth-century Petra papyri themselves, discovered in 1993 and now in the course of publication, has to be seen as an official language deployed in public contexts, into which the intentions of the (hypothetically) Arabic-speaking inhabitants had to be translated.

² See Millar 2006: esp. 85.

³ *CIS* II 3, no. 4401 = Hillers and Cussini *Palmyrene*: 131, no. 0761.

⁴ Healey *Tomb Inscriptions*.

There are issues here which are far beyond my capacity to deal with, but I will begin by noting that new evidence, from the Petra papyri and other material, shows that there was also a further intrusive element in the public language of Petra, namely Latin. Petra, which is found with the Greek title *metropolis* from the beginning of the Roman period, evidently became a *colonia* early in the third century. Coins give it the title *COLONIA PETRA* or *PETLA COLONI(A)*, and the hybrid Greek–Latin term *metrocolonia* appears on inscriptions.⁵ Now, furthermore, newly published clay *bullae* from Petra record the titles of the city as follows: *COLONIA PETRA METR(OPOLIS)*; *ANTONIANAE COL(ONIAE) HADR(IANAE)*; *MET(ROPOLIS) PETRA ANTONIN(IANA)*.⁶ Confirmation of the continued currency of this mixed Greek–Latin status terminology is offered by the first of the Petra papyri,⁷ an agreement relating to family property dated to May, 537: ἐν Αὐγουστοκολωνίᾳ [Ἀ]ντωνιανῇ... Ἀδριανῇ Πέτρα μητροπόλει τῆς Τρίτης Παλαιστίνης Σαλουτ[αρίας] (ll. 3–4), with a revised text and translation by Hannah Cotton in Chapter 6 of this volume. Papyrus 2, from the following year, confirms that Gaza also continued to enjoy this title: [ἐ]ν κ[ο]λωνίᾳ Γάζῃ (l. 6).

We can surely treat these elements of Latin public vocabulary as formal features, with no implication that Latin was the, or even a, current language of everyday speech in either place. But the demonstration, whose full force will of course depend on publication of the whole archive, that perishable legal documents were still written in Greek in Petra in the sixth century, while the Nessana papyri show that documents, petitions and letters were written in Greek in Nessana, Elousa (no. 29) and Aila (no. 51), between the early sixth and the late seventh centuries, is of a quite different order of significance.⁸ The linguistic situation might have been quite otherwise; these relatively minor cities in semi-desert environments might have sunk to the level of village settlements where no literate or scribal activity still took place. Or Nabataean Aramaic might have come back into use for documents. Or official texts in Greek might have been authenticated by individual written ‘subscriptions’ on the part of witnesses, using whatever Semitic language they were literate in (such Semitic language subscriptions to Greek documents are a common feature of the texts of the Bar Kokhba period from the Judaean Desert, and are a very significant aspect – which deserves further study – of the Euphrates

⁵ See Fiema 2003. ⁶ Gitler 2005. ⁷ Frosén, Arjava and Lehtinen 2002: no. 1.

⁸ See Kraemer 1958 and Cotton, Cockle, Millar ‘Papyrology’: nos. 427–570.

papyri of the mid-third century).⁹ Or, Arabic might, as (by now) the normal language of the population, have assumed the role of the official language used in Petra even before the Islamic conquests. But as it is, there is no Arabic writing in the Petra papyri, or in the Nessana papyri dating from before the Islamic conquest. As for those from Nessana from after the conquest, there are occasional elements in the Arabic script and language, and occasional reflections of Arabic in Greek transliteration, for instance, in nos. 92–3, the name of the current Caliph, Ἀβδελμαλεχ. At least on a superficial view, both of these extremely important archives of perishable documents fully confirm the evidence offered by Leah Di Segni in a major contribution to this volume, ‘Greek inscriptions in transition from the Byzantine to the early Islamic period’. For, as she shows, in particular contexts Greek building inscriptions continue into the eighth century. Particularly noteworthy, in view of the discussion above of Greek as a ‘vehicular’ language capable of incorporating both Latin and Semitic elements, is the inscription which Leah di Segni quotes from her own publication, in a volume edited by the much-regretted Yizhar Hirschfeld, of the Greek inscriptions from the bath complex of Hammat Gader:¹⁰ ‘By order of Abdallah Mu‘awiya, ἀμήρα αλμουμενήν [‘commander of the faithful’], the hot-water system here was cleared and renewed . . . on Monday, December 5, of the 6th indiction, in the year 726 of the κολωνία, year 42 according to the Arabs’ (so 662 CE).

Amazingly, therefore, the status of Gadara as a *colonia* is still recorded, while the current Arab ruler is named in Greek transliteration. However, if we go back to Petra, the continued use of Greek in official documents cannot be the whole story. The economic, social and linguistic context in which the sixth-century documents in Greek were produced cannot be explored fully until they are all published. Nevertheless, advance notices of their content indicate (as we would expect) the presence of numerous Semitic place names and personal names, as well as Semitic terms for plots of land or parts of houses.¹¹

It is at this point that we encounter serious logical problems, without any claim on my part to be able to solve them. First, what, if any, is the social, cultural, legal (as above) or linguistic connection between the Nabataean perishable documents of the later first and early second centuries CE, and the Petra papyri of the sixth? It should be stressed that the

⁹ Feissel and Gascou ‘Documents I’; Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor ‘Documents II’; Feissel and Gascou ‘Documents III’. Syriac subscriptions are found on nos. 1; 3–4; 6–7 (from Marcolpolis; eight different individuals); 9; 10 (from Carrhae); 12. See Cotton 2003: 54–5.

¹⁰ Hirschfeld 1997: no. 54. ¹¹ See, e.g., Koenen 1996; Fiema 2002.

volume of perishable documents in Nabataean Aramaic, though small, is not insignificant. Six such documents (*P.Yadin* 1–4; 6; 9) were published together in 2002,¹² while in Chapter 6 in this volume Hannah Cotton notes there are five or six more, of which only two have been published to date. Given that, by comparison, there are only three perishable documents, all belonging to the third century (as opposed to a long list of literary manuscripts of the early fifth century onwards), in Syriac,¹³ and effectively no intelligible perishable documents in Palmyrene, this is a significant corpus, deserving of detailed study. So (again) what continuity is there between them and the sixth-century papyri? Second, and in historical terms extremely important, can we find in either corpus of material distinct elements which can properly be identified as ‘Arabic’, or elements of vocabulary, or consistent grammatical forms, which might properly be understood as indicating the origins of classical Arabic? It is very probable, obviously enough, that the classical Arabic language as it eventually emerged will have been strongly influenced by the established written Semitic languages of the Roman frontier zone. Furthermore, there seems to be agreement that the Arabic script, first scantily attested in the border zone of the Roman Near East in the sixth century, owes much to Nabataean script. But, as M. C. A. Macdonald has repeatedly warned, script and language are not the same thing, and neither of them is an unambiguous marker of ethnic identity.¹⁴ Robert Hoyland’s ‘Arab kings, Arab tribes and the beginnings of Arab historical memory in late Roman epigraphy’ boldly suggests that the emergence of ‘Arab’ (or ‘Saracen’) political/military formations, under kings or other individual leaders, was a function of the search for support in the frontier zones by the competing Roman and Sasanid Empires; and also that there is genuine plausibility in the picture given in later Islamic sources of various groups having migrated north from southern Arabia to play roles in the frontier zone on the side either of Rome or of Persia. On this view pre-Islamic (or ‘Old’) Arabic derives from south-central Arabia, and came only subsequently to be written in a variant of Nabataean script, as a result of movements north into the Roman/Nabataean sphere. This impressive study, however, still leaves us with major problems concerning the origins of Islam itself. First, the few brief sixth-century inscriptions written in what we can identify as both the language and the script of

¹² See Yadin, Greenfield, Yardeni and Levine *Documents*: 169–277. See also Yardeni *Textbook*.

¹³ See Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac*: 213–48 (Appendix).

¹⁴ See esp. Macdonald 1998; Macdonald 2000; Macdonald 2003.

classical Arabic hardly do anything to prepare us for the composition of a vast and complex new religious text in Arabic, the Koran. Second, this text is suffused throughout with allusions to the Bible. In what contexts will the community from which it emerged have encountered the Bible, and in what language or languages? Hebrew? Greek? Jewish Aramaic (the Targums)? Syriac?

We will not find the answers to these problems among the chapters in this volume, or indeed anywhere else. What we will find is a further series of important studies confronting questions of society, culture and language in the Near East: Ted Kaizer on religion and language in Dura, a masterly demonstration of method; Nicole Belayche on language and religion in Palestine of the second to fourth centuries (a scholar whose work stresses that Palestine was only partly Jewish, and was largely inhabited by gentiles in transition from paganism to Christianity); Dan Barag on significant new evidence for the Samaritans, their distinctive Hebrew script and its place in the epigraphic record;¹⁵ Jonathan Price and Shlomo Naeh, contributing important methodological approaches, as well as comparative material on the transcription of languages into different scripts, to their focus on Talmudic attitudes to the language and scripts permissible for the Torah. This study is highly relevant to the question raised above, of the relation of nascent Islam to the Bible. There would eventually be a version of the Bible in the Arabic script and language, though there is no concrete evidence for it until the ninth century.

For the same reasons, as well as many others, there is great value in Sebastian Brock's apparently effortless survey (and handlist) of Syriac inscriptions in late antique Syria, which we may see as matching Marlia Mango's study of the extraordinarily rich harvest of late antique Syriac manuscripts,¹⁶ or alternatively as being accompanied by his own recently published guide to the Bible in Syriac.¹⁷ The significant advances that there have been in recent decades, both in the range of material and in its digestion and organisation, still leave open the challenge of a social history of Syriac in relation to Greek, to Hebrew or Jewish Aramaic and to the 'Arabs' or Saracens of the frontier zones of the Near East.

Related questions of language contact arise also in Walter Ameling's valuable survey of the epigraphy of the Jewish Diaspora in Asia Minor and Syria, based on the relevant volumes of *Inscriptiones Iudaicae Orientis*

¹⁵ It may be worth noting that Jerome, with his exceptional capacity for noting details about his environment, comments on the Samaritan script, *Praef. In Samuelem et Malachim* (PL XXVIII, cols. 547f.); *Comm. in Ezechielem* 9: 4–6 (CCL LXXV 106).

¹⁶ Mango 1991. ¹⁷ Brock 2006.

(2004) I–III, in which he himself edited the second volume on Asia Minor. Here too, first as regards Asia Minor, there have been significant new contributions: Harland's book on Jewish communities in relation to pagan associations and (less convincingly) to Christian congregations – not represented in epigraphy before Constantine;¹⁸ or his very important study of the Jewish inscriptions of Hierapolis, which among other things presents an example of a man who must himself be Jewish leaving a fund to the local association of purple-dyers for the annual celebration of the festivals of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.¹⁹ Even more significant is the powerful demonstration by Jodi Magness that the archaeological evidence – in essence the coins found under the mosaic floor – indicates that the Sardis 'synagogue' (or public building converted for Jewish religious use) should date to the sixth century.²⁰ This late date, if confirmed, must give an extra significance to the presence of a group of Hebrew inscriptions, paralleling the emergence of Hebrew in the late antique/early medieval Jewish inscriptions of the western Mediterranean. In previous centuries in Asia Minor, the image which Jewish inscriptions presented had been monolingually Greek.

Ameling observes that that had not been the case in the Syrian region, as the example of Dura shows (also discussed by Kaizer, see above). The epigraphic evidence for Jewish communities in the Syrian region is relatively slight compared to that from Asia Minor (in line with the contrasting strength of the 'epigraphic habit' in the two regions). But it is enough to suggest that, unlike Asia Minor, there was a real bilinguality (or trilinguality in Dura, with Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew in evidence). But the question of language as against script comes in again. The square Hebrew script is used for Jewish Aramaic in Dura, and appears also in Edessa – but for writing Jewish Aramaic or the local Syriac? Again, there is a bilingual Jewish epitaph from Palmyra, with the Semitic component written in Palmyrene script. So what version of Aramaic language or script did Jews living in Palmyra use for everyday life?

It is widely believed among Syriac specialists that the Old Testament was translated into Syriac directly from Hebrew, and very probably in Osrhoene. What forms of social and linguistic interaction are implied by that? The question of the language used by Jews in the Syrian region, helpfully raised by Ameling, needs to be pursued further, and linked up (once again) with that of the Jewish presence or influence in the province of Arabia (now roughly northern Jordan), which is where in the eyes of

¹⁸ Harland 2003.

¹⁹ Harland 2006.

²⁰ Magness 2005.

late antique writers in Greek or Latin ‘Arabs’ lived (see Hoyland’s chapter, along with a survey of my own).²¹ Here, the mosaic floor of the synagogue at Gerasa portrays the story of Noah, and is bilingual in Greek and Jewish Aramaic.²² But the enquiry should be pursued also further south, to the borders of the Empire and beyond: to the Northern Hejaz, Himyar (the Yemen) and the Hadramaut, all of which (quite apart from narrative sources) produce scattered epigraphic evidence of a Jewish presence in late antiquity.²³ Once again, we come back (potentially and speculatively) to the origins of Islam and its relation to the Bible.

Returning for a moment to the heart of the Greek world, in Greece and Asia Minor, we have in Chapter 4 Marijana Riel’s classic study of *threptoi* as they appear in the literary and epigraphic evidence, a demonstration of how we can go beyond the words we read, and reconstruct a significant element of social history. The same is true of the following Chapter 5, by Angelos Chaniotis, on ‘Ritual performances of divine justice: the epigraphy of confession, atonement, and exaltation in Roman Asia Minor’, with the important additional element that many of the inscriptions reflecting varieties of pagan individual piety in Asia Minor (the territory first fully explored by Stephen Mitchell in *Anatolia II*) put on record the actual words spoken, by way of confession or of reverence for the gods, by individuals. In these texts we thus pass beyond narrative or allusion to what is (at least) represented as verbatim recording. Papyrus records of proceedings may do the same of course, but not (so far as I know) in religious contexts, as opposed to juridical ones. It is worth stressing how close the epigraphic records discussed by Chaniotis are to the remarkable series of (apparently) verbatim confessions of heresy by former Tessaresskaidekatitai and Novatians in the same area (Lydia), which were laid before the First Council of Ephesus in 431 CE.²⁴ More generally, the Acts of the late antique Church Councils represent a remarkable, and largely neglected, storehouse of material which is preserved, like the vast majority of our literary texts, in medieval manuscripts, but goes back directly to contemporary record-taking, and hence could be seen as a form of documentary evidence.

Finally, there are the two concluding papers on Egypt, surely the richest field of exploration for the ‘clash of civilisations’ (or co-existence of civilisations, in historical tradition, literary forms, art and architecture, social relations, law and language) that the ancient world has to offer. The

²¹ Millar 2005.

²² See Piccirillo 1992: 290–1.

²³ See Bowersock 2004.

²⁴ See Millar 2004.

effort required to master Egyptian in its three distinct forms of script, hieroglyphic, demotic and Coptic, is no excuse for the failure of modern scholarship to do more than pick at a few aspects.²⁵ If significant further steps in exploring the social and linguistic history of Egypt in the Graeco-Roman period are to be taken, the chapter by Tonio Sebastian Richter, 'Greek, Coptic and the "language of the Hijra": the rise and decline of the Coptic language in late antique and medieval Egypt', should be an essential point of reference, both (as mentioned above) as an introduction to modern literature on the methodology of language history, and as providing paired case studies of the emergence of Coptic as a language (and script) of Christian culture on the one hand, and of its decline in the face of Arabic on the other. What this already very substantial chapter does not cover is what it in effect takes for granted, namely the established role of Coptic, along with Greek, in Christian Egypt of the fourth to seventh centuries. Were there separate communities of Greek and of Coptic speakers, or was individual bilingualism common? Did the use of Coptic equate to a sense of Egyptian ethnic, or national, identity? How (if at all) did the currency of these two Christian languages relate to divisions between Chalcedonians on the one hand and the predominant anti-Chalcedonians, or Monophysites, on the other? It will be observed that a closely comparable set of questions could be posed about the respective roles of Greek and Syriac in the Near Eastern provinces proper. But what difference did it make that Coptic was the inheritor of an unbroken tradition, in written language, literature, art and architecture, stretching back over three millennia? Or, on the other hand, that Syriac-using Christians were to be found also beyond the Roman frontiers, in the Sasanid Empire?

The division between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians, as it was at the moment of the Islamic occupation of Egypt in 641 CE, is the starting point of Arietta Papaconstantinou's chapter "What remains behind": Hellenism and Romanitas in Christian Egypt after the Arab conquest', with which this volume concludes. Again if 'ordinary life' papyrus documents are deployed, rather than the partisan views expressed in competing Christian works, the picture that emerges is of a persistence of Greek elements, for instance, in language, scribal practice, onomastics or toponymy, as well as continuing allusions to the emperors and to imperial legislation, all of which conflicts totally with any simplistic notion of a 'nationalist' rejection of all things Greek by Coptic-speaking

²⁵ The major recent work by Clarysse and Thompson 2006, using both Greek and Demotic documents, is an important step forward.

anti-Chalcedonians. In its portrayal of the Greek elements still present in daily life in the eighth century, this chapter forms a natural pair with that by Leah Di Segni mentioned above.

Neither this nor any other contribution in this collection makes a claim to offer definitive answers to questions of social, linguistic or religious history. What the volume offers is a mass of new material, and suggestions of new starting points in approaching the complex history of the eastern Mediterranean in the imperial, late antique and early Islamic periods.

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*The language of power:
Latin in the Roman Near East*

CHAPTER I

*The presence, role and significance of Latin in the epigraphy and culture of the Roman Near East**

Werner Eck

The following story told by Cassius Dio is often repeated. In AD 43, after the emperor Claudius provincialised the territory of the Lycian Koinon on account of internal unrest, an embassy of Lycians appeared before the Senate in Rome. In the course of the discussion it happened that one of the ambassadors did not understand the question posed by Claudius in Latin. In consequence Claudius deprived him of the Roman citizenship, maintaining that no one could be a Roman citizen who did not also understand Rome's language.¹ We may get the impression that command of Latin was required of a Roman citizen, or was a prerequisite in order to become one. In fact nothing of the sort was true under Claudius or any other Roman emperor, as is implied in another story from the same reign preserved by the same author.² Soon after assuming power Claudius saw a theatrical performance of a Pyrrhic dance by young people whom Caligula had brought from Achaia. After the performance Claudius bestowed the Roman citizenship on the troupe and sent it home.³ It is of course unlikely that any of the young men knew any Latin.⁴ Nonetheless the Roman citizenship was given not only to them but also to their relatives: parents, siblings, as well as grandparents and great uncles – as witnessed in the many inscriptions from Achaia which mention the family of T. Statilius Lamprias who died at the age of 18. This young man happened to be one of the dancers whom Claudius rewarded with the Roman citizenship. It need scarcely be said that without exception

* I would like to thank Hannah Cotton for the translation of the German text, and Sarah Bartmann for translating the footnotes.

¹ Cassius Dio, 60.17.4.

² This one example from Claudius' reign can therefore not be generalised, despite attempts to do so, such as Levick *Roman Colonies*: 104, 130.

³ Cassius Dio, 60.7.2.

⁴ And it is indeed quite unlikely that Rome made any effort to check their language skills.

the inscriptions recording the new Roman citizens, which come from the youth's hometown of Epidauros, are written in the Greek language.⁵

By the beginning of the imperial period at the latest, possession of the Roman citizenship and knowledge of Latin no longer had to be two complementary aspects of Romanisation – certainly not in the eastern part of the Empire. Had it been otherwise, we should have found a huge quantity of communications in Latin all over the eastern provinces, in very many forms, including also inscriptions. This is not the case. In the affluent and densely populated city of Kyzikos, with c. 550 grave inscriptions – among which, to judge by the names, there were quite a few Roman citizens⁶ – there are only three Latin texts, one of which belongs to a soldier from the Balkans, who was not a citizen of Kyzikos. In Sagalassos, a town in Pisidia with more than 300 known epigraphic documents, the number of Latin texts amounts to a meagre five inscriptions.⁷ Altogether Latin is scarcely present in the epigraphic remains of many other big cities of Asia Minor and the Near East.

It would be wrong of course to assume that the epigraphic remains available today are representative of the original language situation in the various regions of the Imperium Romanum. This is especially true in the case of languages which have not left written records, or at least were not used on monuments which were meant to withstand the ravages of time. The German language left no trace in the thousands of inscriptions from Roman times on the Rhine – if we ignore seven instances in which occasionally the surname of the mother-goddesses is written with a plural dative ending *-ims*.⁸ The native language of the city of Side, in southern Asia Minor, was in common use well into the first or even second century AD, but only a very few, extremely short texts in this language have survived to

⁵ *IG IV*² 82–84; see Eck and Pangerl 2003: 347; 2008: 213; of W. Eck and A. Pangerl (forthcoming) “Vater, Mutter, Schwestern, Brüder...” 3. Akt, *ZPE* 166.

⁶ *IK* 18 (Kyzikos) nos. 126, 380, 482. No. 424 is again mentioned by Schwertheim himself in *IK* 26 (Kyzikos) no. 116 under the heading of Miletropolis. Perhaps this text was brought from one of the colonies of north-western Asia Minor. The other texts in volume II of the inscriptions of Kyzikos, not yet published, e.g. dedications or public documents such as building inscriptions, so-called *tituli honorarii* etc., amount to nearly 600 testimonia. As E. Schwertheim generously told me, they show the same picture for the languages.

⁷ Four of these texts were found since 2004; the fourth is the edict of Set. Sotidius Strabo Libuscidianus, *AE* 1976: 653. Cf. now Eck 2008: 113.

⁸ *CIL* XIII 8157; Nesselhauf and Lieb 1959: nos. 232–4; *CIL* XIII 7892, 7861a. One further dative plural ending *-ims* is assumed for the *matronae Saitchamiae*, but this rests solely on a conjecture of *CIL* XIII 7916 (Hoven), where the tradition has *Saitchamimi*. Cf. now also Eck 2004: 287.

this day.⁹ According to Jerome, the Celtic language was spoken in Galatia even in the fourth century, just as in Gaul,¹⁰ but there is no epigraphic evidence for this. Inscriptions in Old Syriac are relatively few (see Brock in this volume), although it was already a written language at the latest with Bardesanes in the second century AD. The languages were there but they have not survived in the inscriptions except in a very insignificant manner, certainly in no way reflecting reality.

The discrepancy between reality and survival in epigraphic texts is not unique to the local languages; it is also true of Greek and Latin, that is, the two languages which in many places 'competed' with each other for dominance in the public sphere. One factor, easily grasped and yet not always taken properly into account, was at work everywhere and always: the inscriptions which have survived, with few negligible exceptions, were written on durable materials – almost always on stone, hardly ever on bronze, at least in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. This durable material was selected almost exclusively for an enduring public memorial of events, deeds and people: dedications to divinities on bases and altars, building inscriptions, texts honouring the living or the dead attached to busts, statues, personifications of cities, of virtues and of heroes, and finally the myriad inscriptions attached to small or flamboyant graves. Texts attached to such monuments were more or less all written on stone. Over 90 per cent of all surviving inscriptions are of this kind – the so-called *Memorialinschriften*, to use the German term.

However, there was an infinitely greater number of texts which used other materials altogether: whitewashed wooden tablets or walls on which one could write in paint.¹¹ In Latin one speaks of *tabulae dealbatae*, and in Greek of λευκώματα as a common writing material. But the texts written on such materials were in most cases of a radically different nature from those written on stone. The inscriptions on wood advertised food products and other merchandise, they promoted a candidate in an election campaign, they listed jury members, liturgies and market prices, they gave notice of games, and finally they contained edicts of the emperors or regulations of governors.¹² The difference between the content and purpose of the two categories is clear. Behind the texts written on stone lies the desire to retain a memory of an event or of a person beyond the

⁹ *IK* 43 and 44 (Side); cf. *IK* 44 (Side), appendix 630.

¹⁰ Hieronymus, *Commentarius in Galat.* 2 praef. (*PL* XXVI 429).

¹¹ Cf. Eck 1998: 203–17; Eck 1999c: 55.

¹² Cf. for example *Lex Irnitana* 85: *magistratus ut in publico habeant album eius, qui provinciam obtinebit exque eo ius dicant.*

present; to keep the memory of an event or of a person for generations to come. The keyword here is *memoria*. No such intention informs the inscriptions on wood. What was at stake here was the need to be understood regarding prescribed action; dire consequences could befall those ignorant of the information such inscriptions contained.¹³ Those responsible for such texts were guided by one consideration only, the need for the language used in them to be easily understood by those reading them. In the Roman east this meant using Greek, the lingua franca of the time, but also Aramaic in its different variants. 'Understanding' was not the prime consideration when it came to inscriptions on stone; they achieved their effect even when the formulation was not understood by all and sundry, for such inscriptions were normally attached, as pointed out above, to monuments which were eloquent enough in their own way; the accompanying inscriptions only served to define more closely the message already transmitted by the monument itself. In the case of the 'memorial epigraphy' the choice of language was therefore less influenced by the anticipated audience, and far more motivated by personal considerations; its main concern was to ensure that the specific identity of the person(s) associated with the monument received its appropriate and full expression. The different considerations and different aims which characterised the two categories of inscriptions found in the Roman east at the time inevitably influenced the choice of language in each of them.

Our dilemma is that almost the entire corpus of texts whose message and effect were immediate and meant for the here and now were written on perishable materials and so did not survive. Our acquaintance with the text of the trilingual *titulus crucis* described in the Gospel of John is nothing short of an accident.¹⁴ (The alleged fragment of the *titulus* in Santa Croce di Gerusalemme in Rome is a later product.)¹⁵ *P. Yadin* 16, a Greek copy on papyrus of Babatha's land declaration, is all that survived of the original trilingual text on some perishable material, which was displayed in Rabbat Moab, and in which the declaration itself was written in Greek, the subscription of the guardian, i.e. the oath taken by Babatha, in Jewish Aramaic, and that of the Roman prefect in Latin.¹⁶ Lost however, though not beyond surmise, is the large-scale, even massive epigraphic documentation, which once existed here as elsewhere.

¹³ The question of literacy will not be considered here. ¹⁴ John 19:19–20.

¹⁵ Hesemann 2002 should be ignored. The author did not apply even the most fundamental epigraphic methods.

¹⁶ *P. Yadin* 16. See Cotton 1996: 29.

There were thus two categories of epigraphic texts. Their distinct characters were determined by purpose and function; yet at the same time the ephemeral category has suffered total extinction. This means that we have to ask very seriously how representative the surviving epigraphic evidence can really be.

There is no good reason to believe, and in fact there is good reason to doubt, that the surviving epigraphic evidence reflects the relative occurrence of the various languages in the entire corpus which once existed. It is impossible to determine the extent of the distortion caused by the vicissitudes of transmission, and the extent to which our own perception of the linguistic situation has also suffered as a result. Our confidence that epigraphic documentation on perishable material once existed does not make up for our inability to reconstruct its precise form. All we can do is remain aware of the problem, while resigning ourselves to the fact that our evidence can only be partial.

These general considerations are relevant and should be applied to our inquiry about the true significance of the use of Latin on inscriptions in the eastern provinces of the Imperium Romanum.

It is impossible to know precisely the total number of Latin inscriptions from the eastern part of the Roman Empire, by which I mean the area extending from the western coast of Asia Minor to the Syrian Desert, and including Egypt and Cyrenaica as well. This huge territory (twelve provinces in the second century AD) yielded c. 1500 Latin inscriptions when the last supplement to Volume III of the *CIL* was published in 1902. By way of comparison we may note that the total number of Latin texts from all the other provinces included in the same *CIL* volume – Thracia, Achaia and Macedonia, the two Moesiae, the three Daciae, Pannonia Superior and Inferior, Noricum and Raetia – reaches at least 14,000 – ten times as many as in our region.¹⁷ *CIL* III went to press before intensive scholarly attention and extensive excavation in the east reached their peak. Consequently we cannot determine the precise number of Latin texts recovered in the intervening hundred years, but a few examples may give us an idea of relative magnitudes. The Caesarean and Augustan colonia Alexandria Troas displays 70 Latin inscriptions in the corpus published by Marijana Riel in 1997; 30 of these had appeared already in *CIL* III, and 40 since.¹⁸ The colonia Heliopolis and its territory display more than 200

¹⁷ The last number of *CIL* III is 15202, 1–4. Because of its many sub-numbers the exact total of inscriptions is hard to tell. In any case it is of no great relevance for our purposes.

¹⁸ Riel 1997.

Latin inscriptions in *IGLS* VI published in 1967; only 75 were recorded in *CIL* III; the large remainder has been added since 1902, and more have turned up since 1967.¹⁹ A third example may suffice: Caesarea Maritima, the capital of Judaea/Syria Palaestina, yielded only 3 Latin documents in 1902, when the last part of *CIL* III appeared in print.²⁰ The corpus published by Lehmann and Holum, which includes all inscriptions known down to 1992, has 82 Latin texts, including milestones.²¹ Since then at least 80 more Latin texts, perhaps even more, have cropped up in the course of major excavations conducted on the site.²² Looking back we discover that the entire territory of the Roman province of Judaea/Syria Palaestina contributed 67 Latin inscriptions to the *CIL* III; 29 of these are milestones and 8 short texts belong to what is known as *instrumentum domesticum*.²³ Today, as Ben Isaac and Israel Roll tell me, we know of at least 150 milestones with Latin texts on them. In addition to the milestones and the inscriptions from Caesarea, we have today around 200 Latin inscriptions from the entire territory covered by the *CIIP*, which is more or less coterminous with the Roman province of Judaea/Syria Palaestina.

The increase in the number of Latin inscriptions since the beginning of the twentieth century varies greatly from place to place; nevertheless the same tendency apparent elsewhere in the regions covered in the *CIL* shows itself also for the eastern provinces with which we are concerned here, namely the doubling and sometimes tripling of the number of Latin inscriptions since 1902. Thus we have to reckon with at least 4,000 Latin texts from this area, probably even more, as compared with c. 1,500 known a hundred years ago.

The estimate of the number of Latin inscriptions says little of course about their significance and the role played by the Latin language within the epigraphic documentation as a whole. This task is far harder. For the Greek texts we have nothing like the *CIL* after 1877 when the *CIG* was concluded – not that the *CIG* could ever compare with the *CIL*! Therefore, I can do no more than try to learn from a few isolated examples about the concrete relationship between the Latin and Greek epigraphic testimonies.²⁴ The other languages must remain outside our consideration in the absence of multilingual corpora like the *CIIP*, currently in

¹⁹ See e.g. *AE* 1994: 1772; *AE* 1995: 1572 = *AE* 1997: 1544; *AE* 1997: 1543; *AE* 1998: 1435–7.

²⁰ On this see Eck 1999c: esp. 238. ²¹ Lehmann and Holum 2000.

²² Various inscriptions have been published in the meantime, others are in preparation. See below, notes 113 and 115.

²³ Eck 1999c: 238. ²⁴ Cf. with similar thoughts and examples Levick 1995: 393.

progress. No multilingual corpus exists for example for Dura-Europos, where Latin, Greek and various Semitic languages are attested.²⁵

For Ephesus, the largest Greek city in Asia Minor and the *caput provinciae* of the Roman province of Asia, some 3,800 Greek and Latin inscriptions are collected in the eight volumes so far published.²⁶ At least two hundred of these belong to the period before the coming of Rome and another 200, probably more, belong to late antiquity, that is to the fifth century onwards – in other words, these 400 belong to periods in which Latin could not be expected. Of the remaining roughly 3,400 texts there are *c.* 275 Latin and bilingual (i.e. Latin and Greek) documents – less than 10 per cent of the whole.²⁷ For Smyrna, another big polis on the western coast of Asia Minor, we have *c.* 690 inscriptions datable roughly between the first century BC and the fourth century AD, as against at most 30 Latin and bilingual inscriptions.²⁸ Pergamon, the former Attalid capital, can boast of altogether 16 Latin inscriptions in the Roman period as against 533 in Greek, at least in the volumes of Pergamon VIII, 2 and 3.²⁹ Prusa ad Olympum in Bithynia is represented by altogether 210 inscriptions, only 9 of which are in Latin or bilingual.³⁰ Philadelphia in Lydia displays an even sharper disproportion: 500 Greek texts as against 8 in Latin.³¹ Side, on the southern coast of Turkey, an important station on the seaway between East and West with visitors from regions where a variety of languages was spoken, exhibits 7 Latin texts out of a total of 356.³² According to Calder the relationship of Latin to Greek in western and central Phrygia is 3 to 100.³³

So far I have considered only Greek poleis with their old traditions and unique political and cultural self-awareness. For comparison I should like to mention a few cities which had already existed as communities but in the Augustan period or later went through a profound transformation as a result of receiving the status of a colony and a dose of new

²⁵ Cf. Millar 1995: 403. ²⁶ *IK* 11–17.2 (Ephesos).

²⁷ It is not easy to calculate the exact figure of published texts in *IK* 11–17.2. At least 1,434 numbers have been left out, so that the last number in the corpus, 5115, is of limited relevance. (This last number led Levick 1995: 394, n. 3 to a wrong estimate of the relation between Roman and Greek inscriptions.) Some, but not all, of the numbers are subdivided into a, b and c, so that the real number of inscriptions is greater. Conversely, some inscriptions are published under two numbers, for example in vol. Ia and in vol. VII, reducing the final total of texts. All in all, the sum of 3,800 seems realistic.

²⁸ *IK* 23–4.2 (Smyrna).

²⁹ *Altertümer von Pergamon*, VIII 2, 1890; *Altertümer von Pergamon*, VIII 3, 1969.

³⁰ *IK* 39 (Prusa).

³¹ Cf. Petzl 2007.

³² *IK* 43 and 44 (Side). ³³ *MAMA* VII 30 n. 1; cf. Levick *Roman Colonies*: 133, n. 2.

settlers.³⁴ We may start with Heliopolis which from the Augustan period either was part of the Roman colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Berytus or, as has long been believed, was a colony in its own right.³⁵ There we find 201 Latin inscriptions and only 143 in Greek³⁶ – a striking contrast to what we have witnessed so far in Asia Minor. In Parium, likewise a Roman colony in the north-west of the province of Asia, among 67 texts only 19 are written in Latin; at least some of the Greek texts go back to the pre-Roman period, which tilts the ratio only a bit against Latin.³⁷ A similar phenomenon occurs in the Roman colony of Apamea in Bithynia: only 11 out of 62 inscriptions are in Latin.³⁸ By contrast: of the 173 imperial texts found in the colony of Alexandria Troas, mentioned above, 70 are composed in Latin; and not a few of the Greek are to be dated later than the fourth century AD.³⁹ The status of a city as a Roman colony had therefore an effect – albeit in different degrees in different colonies – on the epigraphic use of Greek or Latin. I shall come back to this later.

Even more important than finding out exact numbers is to know why people had recourse to a particular language in the public life of a city, and more specifically to know who used it. Finally it is vital to find out the relative use of Latin and Greek in texts of similar content and function; for the exclusive use of one language or the other in a particular context calls for an entirely different sort of explanation from the indifferent use of both languages in one and the same context.

Space does not permit a review of the evidence from the entire area, nor does the present state of publication allow it. I shall restrict myself to four cities situated in different areas and in different cultural contexts, which enjoyed different legal status and economic conditions. Perhaps on the basis of these few, yet not untypical, examples we may make some progress and tentatively outline some general conclusions.

1. Ephesus, the large harbour on the western shore of the province of Asia with a great Hellenistic tradition, the seat of the Roman governor and of the equestrian procurator in charge of the imperial properties, the *patrimonium*, in the province. Perhaps also other procurators, for example for the *vicesima hereditatium*, had a permanent seat there.

³⁴ For the epigraphic analysis of a Roman colony in the east, cf. Levick *Roman Colonies*: 133.

³⁵ See the introduction by J.-P. Rey-Coquais to *IGLS VI* 35 and Millar 1990: 10.

³⁶ The numbers in *IGLS VI* go from 2711 to 3017. But there are quite a few *bis*-numbers. And under certain numbers more than one fragment is sometimes reported; for example under number 3002 there are at least twenty-five recognisable fragments in Latin and at least two in Greek. Each fragment represents a discrete inscription.

³⁷ *IK 25* (Parion). ³⁸ *IK 32* (Apameia). ³⁹ See Riel 1997.

2. Perge, on the southern shore of Turkey, most probably the *caput provinciae Lyciae et Pamphyliae*, and hence like Ephesus the seat of the senatorial governor and the fiscal procurator of the province.
3. The colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Heliopolis in the province of Syria, later Syria Phoenice. The settlement and its territory had the status of a colony from the Augustan age, either as an independent colony or as part of Berytus, becoming independent of it only under Septimius Severus.⁴⁰
4. The colonia Prima Flavia Augusta Caesariensium in Judaea, a Roman colony since the time of Vespasian and since then the seat of the senatorial governor and the fiscal procurator.

EPHESUS

No other Greek polis in the eastern provinces boasts of as many Latin or bilingual (Latin and Greek) inscriptions as Ephesus: 275 altogether. This number has the advantage that single examples cannot so easily distort the overall impression. Instead, we have to assume that the preserved texts mirror relatively faithfully the situation in the Roman period – of course only for inscriptions on stone.

A polis was an autonomous community. Nevertheless, whenever local conflicts exceeded the capacity of the local authorities, Rome as the dominant power would lay down the law. These rules were issued by emperors and proconsuls in the form of edicts, letters and rescripts. Imperial and proconsular edicts and letters found in Ephesus outnumber those of any other city in the provinces. This is partly owing to its being the seat of the proconsul of the province of Asia. Nearly forty imperial letters and more than thirty edicts issued by proconsuls and other officials are completely or partly preserved. Of these, only eleven were issued in Latin: nine stem directly from the emperors and of these one is a bilingual copy.⁴¹ Only six Latin texts are securely dated: two copies of the *sacrae litterae* of Septimius Severus and Caracalla,⁴² three edicts issued between 344 and 372/8,⁴³ and another late text. A few texts with no date could also be late, i.e. from the fourth century AD.⁴⁴ Only one proconsular edict, issued by Paullus Fabius Persicus, regulating the financial administration of the Artemision,

⁴⁰ Millar 1990; for a summary see the introduction of J.-P. Rey-Coquais to *IGLS* VI 34.

⁴¹ *IK* 11 (Ephesos) 41, 42, 43; *IK* 12 (Ephesos) 207, 208, 224; *IK* 14 (Ephesos) 1328; *IK* 17 (Ephesos) 4136, 4137 (emperors); *IK* 11 (Ephesos) 19 A/B (governors).

⁴² *IK* 12 (Ephesos) 207f.; on this cf. Drew-Bear, Eck and Herrmann 1977: 355.

⁴³ *IK* 11 (Ephesos) 41–3. ⁴⁴ *IK* 14 (Ephesos) 1328.

was issued in Latin in Ephesus; however, a Greek translation of this edict is known as well,⁴⁵ which confirms the general rule: the great majority of all imperial and proconsular documents found in Ephesus, *c.* 60 examples, are all in Greek.⁴⁶ This conforms perfectly to the data from Egypt, where all imperial edicts and letters, without exception, became known to the wider public through a Greek medium.⁴⁷ Obviously, the main consideration at work was the desire to make them readily comprehensible.

This purpose is particularly evident in one Latin text, the *sacrae litterae* of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, sent to Asia in 204. The text states that the recipient of the letter⁴⁸ should have been aware of the law that Roman senators, even when residing in the provinces, are exempt from the obligation of billeting in their houses.⁴⁹ The large number of copies of this imperial letter known from various cities in the province of Asia and elsewhere shows that this abundance of copies was not created by the original recipient of the imperial letter, but rather by those who benefited from the privilege, namely, the provincial senators, many of whom hailed from Ephesus.⁵⁰ In acting thus, they wished to protect their property from the hateful billeting. The obvious explanation for the publication and reproduction (by resident senators) of the imperial letter in Latin in the Greek context of Ephesus is that it was the language of the senatorial class. Nonetheless, we also possess Greek versions of the same text from Paros, Ancyra and Alexandria Troas, though we can safely assume that in all these places⁵¹ there existed at one time in public an original Latin version, just as in Satala, the Phrygian Pentapolis and in Antiocheia ad Pisidiam, where only a Latin text was found.⁵²

It seems to me that the great number of copies of this imperial letter shows that there was a concrete purpose for its frequent display in public, and particularly in Latin. The target of these displays was the Roman officials in the provinces, from the proconsul of Asia and his senatorial entourage and numerous procurators to soldiers travelling on official

⁴⁵ *IK* 11 (Ephesus) Ia 17–19.

⁴⁶ It is not necessary to refer to the individual inscriptions here. These texts can easily be found in the different volumes of *IK* 11–17.2 (Ephesus).

⁴⁷ See Katsoff 1980: 807–44; Purpura 1992: 485.

⁴⁸ See Jones 1984: 93, who – unnecessarily – considers the possibility of a municipal magistrate.

⁴⁹ Above nn. 42 and 48.

⁵⁰ For senators from Ephesus see Halfmann 1982: 627; in the near future F. Kirbihler will publish a new list of Roman senators from Ephesus.

⁵¹ Of the inscription from Alexandria Troas only the Greek version has come down to us, in very fragmentary form. Because of the large number of Latin inscriptions from this colony (cf. above n. 18) we may conclude that the Latin version was lost.

⁵² For a list of the inscriptions see Jones 1984: 93.

business in the provinces. All these groups begrudged the resident senators in the provinces of Asia Minor their privilege which was in conflict with their own prerogative of claiming free board and sleeping quarters – and the language of these officials was predominantly Latin. Hence the need arose to protect their property, in an apotropaic manner, in the language which would be best understood by those threatening it.

Not that *understanding* was always the prime consideration in deciding the language of an inscription in Ephesus – at least not for the entire text. On the *attica* of the door leading to the lower *agora* stands a dedication in Latin to Augustus, Livia, Agrippa and Iulia. The door was dedicated by two freedmen of Agrippa who were transferred to Augustus' hands after their patron's death. Like many other imperial freedmen in Ephesus between the first and the third centuries AD wishing to honour their master or patron with a statue and an inscription,⁵³ Mazaeus and Mithridates chose to engrave the dedication to their patrons in Latin,⁵⁴ and they added their own names in Latin as well: *Mazaeus et Mithridates patronis*. In the middle part of the *attica*, however, comes a short sentence in Greek: Μαζαίος καὶ Μιθριδάτης [τοῖς] πα[τ]ρῶσιν καὶ τῶι δῆ[μῳ]; that means that in the part of the text which stressed that this gate was also made in honour of the people of Ephesus, the two *liberti* inscribed their names once more, this time in Greek. Thus every (literate) inhabitant of Ephesus, even those without knowledge of the Latin language, passing through the gate and looking at the *attica* comprehended immediately who was to be thanked for the impressive door. In this way Mazaeus and Mithridates communicated with the people of Ephesus while doing their duty by their Roman patrons.

In addressing their patrons the two freedmen used their patron's own language; nothing less was possible at least in the early part of the Principate. However, in the city of Ephesus as a whole, honorific dedications to the emperors are hardly ever cast in Latin. Above all the city itself, the Council and People of Ephesus, never use Latin, but always their own Greek language, when erecting a statue to an emperor or dedicating a building to Artemis and an emperor. There is a huge number of such texts – all in Greek. It is thus all the more worthy of notice when an exception is found. Matidia, sister of Sabina and aunt of the

⁵³ The two are similar to the later *liberti Augustorum* only in this single aspect. In the poleis, the latter could not honour their masters (and present themselves!) in this monumental way any longer. This special form is rather to be regarded as typical for the time of the civil wars and immediately afterwards, when many of the traditional social norms had temporarily lost their force.

⁵⁴ *IK 17* (Ephesos) 1: 3006 = Kearsley 2001: no. 151.

emperor Antoninus Pius, was honoured by *bule et civitas Efesiorum* with a statue on whose base a Latin dedication appears.⁵⁵ Nothing in the laconic text which describes only the family relationship gives away the occasion and indirectly the motive for using Latin. The solution may be quite simple though. The end of the text reads: *c(uram) a(gente) Successo lib(erto) proc(uratore)*. Presumably Successus was one of Matidia's many freedmen procurators, who administered the possessions she had all over the Roman Empire. Successus, who was responsible for Matidia's property in Asia, may have taken care of the erection of the statue decreed by the Council and People of Ephesus; he may also have taken over its costs. He translated the original Greek apparent in the formula *bule et civitas Efesiorum*⁵⁶ into Latin, the language spoken by freedmen to their Roman patrons. Thus nothing relevant to the use of language in Ephesus emerges from this example.

Until well into the third century Latin inscriptions on the bases of statues to emperors in the city of Ephesus are exceedingly rare. A change came about in the late third and first half of the fourth century AD, when there is a significant rise in the number of such Latin texts. The emperors Tacitus, Diocletian with the co-regents of the Tetrarchy, Diocletian with Galerius, Maximinus Daia, Constantine and Julian – all make an appearance in Latin in Ephesus; this series concludes with Theodosius and Honorius at the end of the fourth century.⁵⁷ In all these cases an imperial official is the dedicator; above all the proconsul, but also *procuratores* and one *rationalis* are found as dedicators. The strengthening of Latin in dedications to the emperors at this period is not unique to Ephesus, but is common in other places as well: in Perge,⁵⁸ in Salamis in Cyprus,⁵⁹ in Gerasa,⁶⁰ and finally in Caesarea Maritima, with six statue bases on which Latin is used.⁶¹

In general we may see here a reflection of the Romanisation of the Illyrian and Balkan provinces, the provenance of most of the emperors

⁵⁵ *IK* 12 (Ephesos) 283: *Matidiae / divae Marcianae / [A]ug. nepti, divae / Matidiae Aug. f., divae / Sabinae Aug. sorori, / imp. Antonini Aug. Pii / materterae / bule et civitas / Efesiorum / c(uram) a(gente) Successo lib. proc.*

⁵⁶ Otherwise one would expect *ordo et res publica Efesiorum*.

⁵⁷ *IK* 12 (Ephesos) 305–13, 313A, 316; *IK* 17 (Ephesos) 1, 3020–1.

⁵⁸ Neuer Pauly 12.2, 1191 s.v. Ulpus 14. ⁵⁹ *I. Salamis* 130, 131.

⁶⁰ Welles 'The Inscriptions': nos. 105 and 106.

⁶¹ Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 6, 9 (for the date see Eck 2006: 253), 13, 14, 16, 17. The much higher number of Latin inscriptions in honour of the emperor in this late period compared with the earlier period cannot be explained by the disappearance of earlier texts. Nearly all the cities mentioned have numerous inscriptions honouring the emperor in Greek that can be dated to earlier than the late third century.

at that time as well as of many of the men who were sent to govern and administer the provinces. For these emperors, but also for their subordinates, Latin was their own tongue, the language which expressed Rome's greatness and will to survive. They used it in the public sphere of the cities of the eastern provinces under their command, whenever it seemed worthwhile to assert Rome's power and make it plastically present, in a manner quite different from what was common before. It is probably not wrong to think that for any of them, given their cultural background, the Greek language was quite foreign, in contrast to the earlier emperors and their personnel who had belonged to the educated urban classes.⁶²

This need to stress the Latin language as a means of expressing identity was not present in Ephesus until the middle of the third century, not even in the case of the representatives of Rome, the governors or the proconsular legates, nor in that of senators who originated from Ephesus. We possess no fewer than 140 inscriptions in which senators from Ephesus are mentioned either as objects of a dedication in their honour or because they found their last repose in Ephesus. Around 140 texts on statue bases presented to the public in Ephesus the members of the imperial aristocracy intimately associated with Rome. And yet despite the fact that they were honoured precisely because of their close association with Rome's political power, as her representatives par excellence, 120 of the inscriptions were written in Greek and only a small minority of 20 texts in Latin.

The dedicators in the case of this small group of Latin inscriptions, in so far as they are known, were *publicani*, Italians who traded in Ephesus, and soldiers who belonged to the proconsul's *officium*.⁶³ They all came from a Latin-speaking environment and used Latin as a matter of course; the same is true of grave inscriptions of senators who died in Ephesus while serving as Rome's officials.⁶⁴ The majority of private people, as also the *Boule* and *Demos* of Ephesus, used Greek; almost fifty inscriptions involve the city of Ephesus or other provincial cities. Thus for example Pompeius Falco, the former governor of Judaea, is honoured in Greek by the city Flavia Neapolis (Nablus) in Ephesus during his proconsulate.⁶⁵ Neither the cities nor the honorands themselves saw any need or felt any

⁶² This observation harmonises with the observations of Adams *Bilingualism*: 635, that there was no administrative reform of Diocletian introducing Latin as the official language; rather what we see is the consequence of social changes. For the importance of Latin in the east during the late Roman period, see the convincing remarks of Feissel 2001: esp. 40.

⁶³ See for example *IK* 13 (Ephesos) 659a, 706, 715, 817.

⁶⁴ *IK* 13 (Ephesos) 631, 654, 683; *IK* 17 (Ephesos) 2, 4355.

⁶⁵ *IK* 13 (Ephesos) 713. On the specific reason for this unusual honour see Eck 1999a: 67.

pressure to use the language of the ruling power to honour their representatives.

It is therefore all the more striking when something like this does happen. A very young senator, Iunius Maximus, who in the year 166 brought the news of victory against the Parthians to Rome, was exceptionally awarded the quaestorship, which he served out in Asia. The text, written on a base on which his statue once stood, survived in Ephesus.⁶⁶ The name and career of the young senator are in Latin, in the accusative case instead of the dative common in Latin, which gives away the Greek context. The name of whoever had the statue erected is lost, but in all likelihood this was the *Boule* and *Demos* of Ephesus, since none other than T. Flavius Damianus was responsible for the execution of the dedication. He was one of the most widely known sophists alive at the time. Quite remarkably his share in carrying out the project is attested in Greek, as also must have been the lost part attesting the Council and People of Ephesus as the dedicator. There must have been a good reason for this unusual use of Latin, but it did not go so far as to make the self-assured sophist Flavius Damianus give up using his own language in favour of Latin.

Similarly striking is the honouring of one Ti. Claudius Secundus, a *viator tribunicus*, *accensus velatus* and *lictor curiatus* of a proconsul, whose function, albeit not unimportant, was still of a subservient nature.⁶⁷ On the base under his statue, which was commissioned by the Gerusia of Ephesus, the dedication stands first in Latin and is then repeated in Greek. It is hard to know whether the honorand or the dedicators were behind the use of Latin. As it happens our man received a statue from the Italian slave traders in Ephesus; in this case the use of Latin is hardly a cause for surprise. Nor is the use of Greek by a freedman of Secundus, one Ti. Claudius Hermias, who dedicated a statue to his patron, carrying out the decree of the city.⁶⁸ To go back to the striking use of Latin by the Gerusia: whatever the reason, it could not have been the express wish of the *lictor curiatus*, for his own freedman would have been the first one to comply with it and carry it out in his own dedication.

This example demonstrates that there were no hard and fast rules, but in each case different factors operated. To discover them is not always possible. There were no norms governing the use of one language or another, at least not in the sense of a set of fixed rules which one had to observe,

⁶⁶ *IK* 13 (Ephesos) 811 = Kearsley 2001: no. 128.

⁶⁷ *IK* 15 (Ephesos) 1544 = Kearsley 2001: no. 123.

⁶⁸ *IK* 13 (Ephesos) 646; *IK* 15 (Ephesos) 1545.

but rather guidelines to be followed in certain contexts. And again this is easily perceived when we look at Ephesus.

Ephesus was not only the seat of the governor, the proconsul, but also that of the patrimonial procurator of the province of Asia. Whenever he or other equestrian officials were honoured with statues by the city or by private people, this was done in Greek, just as in the case of the senatorial governors. On the other hand there is a large number of dedications by their own subordinate personnel, imperial slaves, or *liberti*, or *cornicularii* or other *officiales*. These texts, *c.* fifteen in total, are all in Latin.⁶⁹ The city is never mentioned as participating in any way in these dedications (e.g. by assigning a place for them). It stands to reason therefore that these statues stood inside the administrative precinct of the procurators themselves, in a self-contained Latin enclave where it was natural to use the language employed by the administration in its daily functions. These norms applied to the personnel alone; the city and citizens of Ephesus were not in the least affected by them.

PERGE

Like Ephesus, Perge was a Greek polis, and likewise the seat of the governor and the financial procurator of the province of Lycia-Pamphylia. It is in the comparison with Ephesus on the one hand and with Caesarea on the other that the true significance of the epigraphic finds in Perge emerges. The two volumes of the city's inscriptions, edited by Sencer Şahin,⁷⁰ comprise *c.* 475 Greek inscriptions from the Roman period up to the end of the third century AD, and 39 Latin or bilingual (Greek and Latin) texts. At first glance the number of Latin and bilingual texts seems relatively identical to the ratio in Ephesus. However, amid this latter group a series of ten bilingual texts can be singled out: they all concern a single act, and therefore cannot be counted as ten different inscriptions, but should rather be seen as one.⁷¹ Hence the proportion of Latin versus Greek inscriptions in Perge deviates considerably from the one seen in Ephesus.

This is not true of the contents of the epigraphic texts in Perge, which follow a pattern not dissimilar to what we have seen in Ephesus. The polis itself, whenever it stirs itself to action, uses its own language, Greek,

⁶⁹ *IK* 13 (Ephesos) 647, 651, 652, 660E, 666, 680, 684B, 696A/B, 820, 861; *IK* 17 (Ephesos) 1, 3043/4, 3045.

⁷⁰ *IK* 54 and 61 (Perge).

⁷¹ *IK* 54 (Perge): 89–94, 96–9. Cf. for the preceding arguments Eck 2000c: 641.

as is known from monuments set up to honour several governors. On the other hand it is only to be expected that the *collegium tabulariorum*, the secretaries working in the office of the financial procurator, should have put up an inscription in Latin above the entrance of a small temple dedicated to the *Numen Augustorum*.⁷² Nor is it very surprising if a governor is honoured by an officer promoted at his behest in Latin,⁷³ or a *procurator Augusti* by an officer who belonged to his *officium*, again in Latin.⁷⁴

Only one text diverges from the normal patterns outlined before. The base of a statue dedicated to Q. Voconius Saxa Fidus, an imperial legate in the first years of Antoninus Pius, displays a text written entirely in Latin. The name of the governor and his career appear in the honorific accusative, as was normal in Greek *tituli honorarii*, and the text opens with the formula: *Curia et [po]pulus / Q. Voconium Saxam Fidum*.⁷⁵ These and other details point to an original Greek text which was subsequently rendered in Latin, without, however, retouching the Greek formulae to fit them to the Latin mould, i.e. without replacing the honorific accusative with the dative and removing the name of the dedicating city to the end. Was the conversion from Greek to Latin a freak occurrence, or occasioned by the wish of the honorand? However this may be, the formulation is exceedingly striking, especially if one takes into account that there are only two other dedications to a governor in Latin from the whole province of Lycia-Pamphylia, where a total of fifty-six honorific inscriptions dedicated to senatorial governors is directly attested (and ten more are indirectly attested); all but three are written in Greek.⁷⁶ The two other texts in Latin are dedications to a governor by his military subordinates, a *decurio* of the cohorts I Flavia Numidarum and a *strator officii*.⁷⁷ There is nothing remarkable about these two dedications – which makes the one by the *Curia et populus* of Perge to the legate Voconius Saxa all the more peculiar.

Otherwise it would seem that the polis of Perge and its official representatives did not feel compelled or even encouraged by the presence of the governor and procurator in their city to replace their own language with Latin in the public sphere, any more than did Ephesus. Only on one occasion of honouring the emperor was there a departure from this

⁷² *IK* 54 (Perge) 211. ⁷³ *IK* 54 (Perge) 156 = Eck 2000b: 251. ⁷⁴ *IK* 54 (Perge) 202.

⁷⁵ *IK* 54 (Perge) 154; cf. Eck 2000c: 645.

⁷⁶ Cf. the documents in Thomasson 1984: 275; Thomasson 1990: 34 and addenda: www.radius.nu/LP/Addenda.IV.html.

⁷⁷ See *IK* 54 and 61 (Perge).

practice on the part of the city. The following text is found under an equestrian statue of Vespasian:⁷⁸

*Imp(eratori) T(ito) Fl(avio)
Vespasiano
Caesari Aug(usto)
ci(ves) R(omani) et ordo
et res publica
Pergensium.*

‘For Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus Caesar Augustus, the Roman citizens, the council and the people of Perge’.

The dedication, with *Titus Flavius* in Vespasian’s name, makes clear that it belongs to the very first months of his rule, before Vespasian’s titulature had become fixed. Thus, the choice of Latin was dictated by political circumstances at a time when the need to make political loyalties apparent was of primary concern. Perge, like other cities, had to make its position clear after the troops of Egypt, Judaea and Syria acclaimed Vespasian as emperor. The order of dedicators – *cives Romani* followed by *ordo* and *res publica* – makes it clear that on this occasion it was the influential Roman citizens in Perge who took the initiative and induced the *ordo* and the *res publica* of the Pergeans to back Vespasian. These were not newly made *cives Romani*, but in all likelihood there were among all the others two Pergeans who sat in the Roman Senate: M. Plancius Varus and C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus. This group deemed it appropriate to make its political loyalties visible in a twofold way: through the public dedication of the equestrian statue to Vespasian, and through the use of Latin.⁷⁹

Perge exhibits yet another striking feature in its use of Latin. One Plancia Magna, daughter of the Neronian–Flavian senator M. Plancius Varus and wife of C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus, suffect consul together with Pliny the Younger in AD 100, i.e. the two senators who had played a decisive role in Perge as early as AD 69, became, probably after her husband’s death, a great benefactress – *euergetes* – of the city. Of two surviving series of statues, one was definitely commissioned by her, and the other most probably was. The latter series, which represents the city’s current and ancient *ktistai*, is inscribed in Greek throughout, thus falling in line with the other monuments of its kind in the polis.⁸⁰ The first series, definitely inspired and paid for by the senator’s wife, contains

⁷⁸ IK 54 (Perge) 54.

⁷⁹ Eck 2000c: no. 654.

⁸⁰ IK 54 (Perge) 101–9.

statues of Diana Pergensis, the Genius civitatis, divus Augustus, divus Nerva, divus Traianus, diva Marciana, diva Matidia, Plotina, Hadrian and Sabina, and is inscribed in both Latin and Greek – with Latin always in the first place.⁸¹ In addition Plancia Magna inscribed her own name in both languages. The texts do not divulge the motive behind the choice of language. It is in the juxtaposition of the two series, the local one and the imperial one, that a key to the true understanding of Plancia Magna's split allegiance is to be found: Perge was her home and also her husband's, and she belonged to the city; on the other hand she was related to the Roman imperial aristocracy twice over; its centre was the Senate, she was the wife of a Roman senator, *senator populi Romani*, as formulated in the *sacrae litterae*.⁸² All these factors seem to have been decisive in her choice of language. No doubt she spent many years in Rome herself. The Latin language was part and parcel of an existence like hers; it could not be set aside even in her own home town, when she erected statues to living and deified emperors.

HELIOPOLIS

As opposed to the two Greek poleis Ephesus and Perge, Heliopolis had the status of a Roman colony from the Augustan age, either as an independent colony or as part of Berytus, becoming independent of it only under Septimius Severus.⁸³ Whether it was an independent colony or part of Berytus is of little consequence for the discussion of the languages used there; either way, Heliopolis enjoyed colonial status from Augustan times, and, like Berytus, received settled veterans of the legio V Macedonica and the legio VIII Augusta, from whose ranks the colony's leading class was probably recruited. *IGLS* VI contains altogether 344 inscriptions, including all the fragments for Heliopolis and its territory. Of these 201 are written in Latin as opposed to 143 in Greek.⁸⁴ The great sanctuary of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus left a deep mark, inter alia, on the shape of the city's epigraphic documentation.⁸⁵ The spread of Christianity from the fourth century onwards, which led to the sanctuary's losing its importance and its grip on the city, coincided therefore with a marked decrease in the number of inscriptions; there are hardly

⁸¹ *IK* 54 (Perge) 96–9.

⁸² Above nn. 42 and 48.

⁸³ Cf. Millar 1990; cf., in addition, the summary by J.-P. Rey-Coquais to *IGLS* VI 34.

⁸⁴ See above n. 36.

⁸⁵ Millar *Roman Near East*: 36, 124, 281; Millar 1990: II, 32.

any dated to late antiquity in Heliopolis,⁸⁶ when, as we shall see in the example of the colony of Caesarea, the Greek language enjoyed a new spell of life in the colonies of the Roman east. Thus the low percentage of Greek inscriptions in the Heliopolis corpus is fully accounted for by the absence there of inscriptions from late antiquity.

Public inscriptions were written in Latin until the beginning of the fourth century; the last emperors to be mentioned are Diocletian and Galerius (the latter as *nobilissimus Caesar*).⁸⁷ Whenever governors or equestrian officials appear in the city's inscriptions, the texts are written in Latin; the dedicators are normally members of the Roman military.⁸⁸ The decurions of the *colonia* figure too in honorary inscriptions or in dedications to the gods in Latin,⁸⁹ but also *seviri*,⁹⁰ a *plumbarius*, i.e. a manufacturer of lead pipes,⁹¹ and people whose social status can not be identified.⁹² Of the deities it was not only the colony's main deity, Iuppiter Heliopolitanus, whose priesthood was held exclusively by members of the decurionate,⁹³ who was invoked in Latin, but also the local god Hadaranes.⁹⁴ Furthermore, teams of workers in charge of one section of a building operation mark the conclusion of their assignment in Latin.⁹⁵ Greek was certainly banished to a second place in the public sphere, even outside the centre, a fact which can only be accounted for by the settlement of substantial numbers of speakers of Latin in the city during the Augustan period, thus causing a decisive change in the language situation. The leading class of the new colony, together with other elements, who carried out this linguistic transformation, had to be numerically strong enough to uphold the position of Latin against Greek and the other indigenous tongues used by other groups of the population which no doubt continued to live on the colony's territory well after its foundation. Citizens of the colony who returned to the colony at the conclusion of their service in the Roman legions abroad, as well as veterans of the garrison of Syria who settled here, enhanced and reinforced the Latin-speaking element in the city.⁹⁶ Such repatriates and new settlers are attested as former officers; but there are also simple veterans. In this way Heliopolis was able to preserve its Latin character – though not fully untainted – through the centuries.

⁸⁶ IGLS VI 2832–5. ⁸⁷ IGLS VI 2771, 2772. ⁸⁸ IGLS VI 2775–9, 2781–7, 2795–6.

⁸⁹ IGLS VI 2791, 2793–4, 2716, 2743. ⁹⁰ IGLS VI 2794; cf. 2793.

⁹¹ IGLS VI 2723 mentioned as such in a dedication to Jupiter.

⁹² IGLS VI 2717–22, 2737–9, 2745, 2748–55. ⁹³ IGLS VI 2790–2. ⁹⁴ IGLS VI 2908.

⁹⁵ See IGLS VI 2827–40. ⁹⁶ IGLS VI 2711–2, 2714, 2781–3, 2785–9, 2796, 2798.

CAESAREA MARITIMA

The *caput provinciae Iudaeae/Syriae Palaestinae* existed as a big settlement when Vespasian established a Roman colony there, a hundred years after the foundation of Heliopolis.⁹⁷ This city, transformed into a Roman colony – the first to be created in this province⁹⁸ – did not receive especially favourable conditions from Vespasian, apart from an exemption from the poll tax; but his son Titus added an exemption from the land tax, thereby endowing it with a clearly privileged status,⁹⁹ almost the status of *ius Italicum*. Unlike Heliopolis, Caesarea was a big city by ancient standards, fitted out by Herod with many urban institutions and structures. During the first Jewish revolt the many Jews who lived in Caesarea were either murdered or fled to join the rebels. It is unlikely that they returned to Caesarea once the revolt was over. Consequently Caesarea became partly depopulated – an excellent precondition for founding a colony there, since it was traditionally necessary for the majority of colonists to possess living quarters inside the city walls, especially in the case of the decurionate class (fragments of a newly discovered city law from Spain show this once again very clearly),¹⁰⁰ while the land outside the city centre served to guarantee the economic stability of the colony. Again we may safely assume that such lands had become available through the flight or death of Caesarea's Jewish residents, as was to happen later in the Peraea, for example, after the Bar Kokhba revolt.¹⁰¹ Some dispute the idea that Vespasian settled colonists in his new colony.¹⁰² However, if one were to interpret the description by Pliny, the emperor's contemporary, of the foundation of a colony in Caesarea – *colonia prima Flavia a Vespasiano deducta* – as this phrase is commonly understood in other cases, new colonists must have been settled there.¹⁰³ Others remark on the absence of names of military units or legionary emblems on the later coins minted by the colony as an objection against the settlement of veterans there.¹⁰⁴ However, such legends appeared on a colony's coinage only when soldiers of only one or two legions had been settled in it, as happened in the case of the Augustan colony of Heliopolis or when a legion

⁹⁷ Cf. the comprehensive study of this aspect for Caesarea by Isaac 1980–81: 31.

⁹⁸ Ptolemais, a colony founded by Claudius, which will be included in the *CILIP*, should be ignored, since it was situated in the province of Syria.

⁹⁹ *Dig.* 50.15.8.7. ¹⁰⁰ Caballos Rufino 2006. ¹⁰¹ Eck 2000a: 139.

¹⁰² See Isaac 1980–81: 39 and Millar 1990: 26.

¹⁰³ Pl. *NH* 5.69. One cannot use Josephus' observation in *BJ* 7.216 that Vespasian did not found any new city in Judaea to counter the assumption that new colonists were settled in Caesarea; settling colonists is not the same as founding a new city. Of course Caesarea could not be a new foundation.

¹⁰⁴ Isaac 1980–81: 40; Millar 1990: 26.

was stationed nearby, as in the case of Aelia Capitolina. But the massive discharge and settlement of an entire legion or of the majority of its soldiers, characteristic of the period of the civil wars and immediately after, had become a thing of the past in the course of the first century, when soldiers were discharged after twenty-five or more years of service and settled. A colony like Cologne (*Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*) on the Rhine or *Camulodunum* (Colchester) in Britain, both created in AD 50, had required the settlement of veterans of several legions – as many as four or even six in the case of Cologne.¹⁰⁵ No legions were disbanded after the conclusion of the Jewish revolt, but after the lengthy campaigns many soldiers were discharged on the grounds of old age or as *causarii* and settled. This is what Vespasian did in Pannonia, for example, when *causarii* from different units found new homes in colonies.¹⁰⁶ The same can be supposed in Judaea. Why then not settle these veterans in Caesarea? The settlement of people with Roman and Latin backgrounds is crucial, even indispensable, to the administration of municipal life in a Roman colony. In addition to Roman magistrates and a Roman-type city council composed of decurions, a new constitution enshrined in a *lex coloniae* reformed the city's internal structure, as happened in the Spanish municipalities under Vespasian himself, even if we have only the later Domitianic municipal charters to prove this: the *lex Salpensana*, *Malacitana*, *Irnitana* and a *lex* for an unknown city.¹⁰⁷ In these Latin – not even Roman – municipalities the use of Roman private law and Roman legal forms in court procedures was taken for granted and the use of Latin treated as a matter of course. As late as the reign of Marcus Aurelius (at a time when some believe that the term *colonia* was but an honorary title), when the city of Troesmis in Moesia Inferior received the status of a Roman *municipium*, a special city law was enacted and published on bronze tablets for this community, introducing the principles of Roman law, which assumed an acquaintance with Roman norms and above all, knowledge of Latin, by magistrates and the council members in order to understand the *lex municipii*, to hold trials, conduct discussions, and formulate and carry out resolutions.¹⁰⁸ I can see no reason to suppose that Vespasian conducted himself any differently in the case of Caesarea. The onus of proof is on those who suggest that Vespasian, a conservative Roman hailing from the Sabine country, would be the *first* one to create a titular colony, in other words the *first* colony where no Romans would be

¹⁰⁵ Eck 2004: 137. ¹⁰⁶ *CIL* XVI 10; *RMD* IV 205; V 323.

¹⁰⁷ For this new law see Caballos Rufino 2006.

¹⁰⁸ The text of the fragments of the *lex municipii* will be published in the near future.

settled and where even the ruling class did not master the Latin language. This seems to me unlikely in the extreme.

It is my opinion therefore that a considerable number of Latin speakers found a home in Caesarea; only such people could make a Roman colony function as such, especially in a place where a large part of the population spoke a Semitic language or Greek. Josephus calls them Syrians.¹⁰⁹ How the old inhabitants were integrated into the new foundation, especially the former leading families, and whether all of them held the Roman citizenship, must remain an open question at present; the same happened, for example, in the Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (modern Cologne). Only a part of the Ubians were given Roman citizenship in 50 AD, others later or never.¹¹⁰ But does the epigraphic documentation of Caesarea Maritima bear out the theoretical considerations outlined above?

The corpus of inscriptions from Caesarea published by Lehmann and Holum¹¹¹ contains altogether 333 Greek texts as against 82 in Latin, favouring, in contrast to what we saw in the case of the colony of Heliopolis, the Greek language – at least at first sight. However, conclusions drawn from the mechanical comparison of absolute numbers may well distort the overall picture in this case. In contrast to Heliopolis, Caesarea continued to play an important role in late antiquity; it may even have gained in importance in the transition from the high Empire. It survived the Diocletianic reforms as the seat of a governor and remained so down to the Arab conquest. The great majority of inscriptions in Greek, many bearing a public character, are to be dated to the later period, that is from the fourth century onwards,¹¹² even if the great bulk of grave inscriptions cannot be dated precisely. Thus the gap between Latin and Greek inscriptions for the first three centuries is far less striking than appears at first glance – and the new unpublished inscriptions only strengthen this conclusion¹¹³ (with the proviso that I am more acquainted with the new Latin texts). But the majority of the Greek inscriptions belong to the late antique period. In sum: the number of Latin and Greek inscriptions in the first three centuries must have been more or less the same.

What kind of city do the inscriptions depict?¹¹⁴ We have to leave aside all texts dedicated by high Roman officials to the emperors under the

¹⁰⁹ Jos *BJ* 2.266; cf. 458, 461. ¹¹⁰ Eck 2004: 159. ¹¹¹ Lehmann and Holum 2000.

¹¹² For example Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 25, 39, 55, 57–9, 85–93.

¹¹³ Cf. Cotton and Eck 2001: 215.

¹¹⁴ It must not be overlooked that the excavations took place in those parts of the city in which the Roman government presented itself with two *praetoria*. That Latin inscriptions were found in this

statues dedicated to them, i.e. the statues of Probus, Diocletian and Maximian, as well as of Galerius and Constantius.¹¹⁵ Similarly we may ignore the dedications to governors or financial procurators by their own personnel, e.g. by the *centurio* Mevius Romanus to the *procurator provinciae Syriae Palaestinae* Valerius Valerianus, or by the *centurio strator* Aurelius Iustinus to the *procurator Augusti* C. Furius Timesitheus.¹¹⁶ We may not however leave out the dedications to governors or procurators by members of the leading class, the city elite.¹¹⁷ A certain Cornelius Quintianus, son of the ex-magistrate (*duumviralis*) Cornelius Taurinus, honours c. 157 the governor, D. Seius Seneca, with a statue; the text on the base is in Latin.¹¹⁸ The *duumvir coloniae* and former military tribune L. Valerius Martialis does the same for the governor C. Iulius Commodus Orfitianus in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.¹¹⁹ Aurelius Theophilus, an *equus Romanus* and *decurio* of the colony, honours with a statue Valerius Calpurnianus, *praefectus Mesopotamiae et Osrhoenae*, who himself in all likelihood hailed from Caesarea, sometime after 222 AD.¹²⁰ The decurionate city council itself dedicated a statue to Aelius Iulianus, a procurator of the province.¹²¹ At least four more such dedications by city councillors (*decuriones*) or the city council as a whole are known to us. In Maiumas (Shuni), situated in the city territory of Caesarea, a member of the elite is honoured by the city council with a monument;¹²² more Latin fragments from Maiumas have yet to be studied. Several inscriptions exhibit what is commonly described as acts of euergetism by members of the ruling class; these too are in Latin,¹²³ as are the measurements of a building.¹²⁴ It is precisely the ruling class which emerges in the inscriptions of Caesarea exclusively in Latin, and as in the colony of Heliopolis, but in stark contrast to the practice in the poleis of Ephesus or Perge, this is so also in dedications honouring Roman officials. This use of Latin has nothing whatsoever to

area is therefore not surprising. But we also know of numerous inscriptions from outside this area. Thus it is unlikely that our impressions are distorted by the special situation of the excavations. Of greater relevance is the fact that only a very small number of votive inscriptions has been found so far. They will be of great significance for a final assessment of the situation.

¹¹⁵ Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 6, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17. Cotton and Eck 2004: 48 published an inscription with a dedication to Divus Aurelianus; this text does not belong to Caesarea Maritima, as was supposed; it comes from Italy (information from Sven Ahrens).

¹¹⁶ Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 3, 4, 7.

¹¹⁷ All the testimonials are listed in Cotton and Eck 2002: 375.

¹¹⁸ Lehmann and Holum 2000: no. 15. The date of Seius Seneca's governorship is now assigned to 155–7: Eck and Pangerl 2006.

¹¹⁹ Cotton and Eck 2001: 226. ¹²⁰ Lehmann and Holum 2000: no. 10.

¹²¹ Lehmann and Holum 2000: no. 11. ¹²² Lehmann and Holum 2000: no. 3.

¹²³ Lehmann and Holum 2000: no. 44.

¹²⁴ Lehmann and Holum 2000: no. 62; on this Eck 2002b: 543.

do with Caesarea being the seat of the two high Roman authorities in the province – for this was true of Ephesus and Perge as well; but it is rather inextricably connected with life in a Roman colony at least at the level of the decurionate class and its use as a normal means of communication well into the third century.¹²⁵ Even in documents written for their own kith and kin, Latin is used almost exclusively, as argued and demonstrated in detail in ‘A New Inscription from Caesarea Maritima and the Local Elite of Caesarea Maritima’; the argument thus need not be given here.¹²⁶ By contrast, Greek is hardly used in the public sphere in the first three centuries. The very absence of Greek constitutes an argument for the dominance of the Latin language in the case of those groups which are attested in the inscriptions, as in Heliopolis. Furthermore, they used it precisely in order to assert and vindicate their social and political superiority – which is not tantamount to saying that this was a prestige language never used except for such occasions.¹²⁷ There is no recognisable difference between Caesarea and Heliopolis. Here too, even outside the ruling classes Latin seems to have been taken for granted as demonstrated in the modest graves of women and *liberti*, not all yet fully published.¹²⁸

If one takes these findings seriously, then the conclusion that the colony was settled by Vespasian with a large number of Latin speakers seems inescapable, which does not mean that he founded there a veteran colony in the same sense as was done in Heliopolis under Augustus. This veteran element was strengthened by the arrival of new Latin speakers, once more especially of veterans of the local garrison who settled here at the conclusion of their military service.¹²⁹ The Latin character of the colony and its leading families was retained well into the third century. Of course the inscriptions do not (and cannot) tell us what proportion of the whole population spoke languages other than Latin in its daily intercourse. But the dominance of Latin in the inscriptions of the important and permanent part of the population suggests that elsewhere, too, it played an important, if not a dominant role.

¹²⁵ Cf. Levick *Roman Colonies*: 136 for the situation in Roman colonies in the provinces of southern Asia Minor on the difference between Latin used as an official language and Greek as a language in daily life: ‘How soon the decurions found themselves debating in a language they would not use at home is impossible to say.’

¹²⁶ Cotton and Eck 2002: 375.

¹²⁷ It has thus to be considered whether the question of language gained relevance in the wake of economic crisis and because of the necessity to recruit new families for the decurionate in the later third century. This should be the case especially if the new decurions came from sections of society in which the influence of Latin was limited.

¹²⁸ Cf. Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 122, 160–4 and unpublished texts.

¹²⁹ Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 32, 119, 146, 148; Cotton and Eck 2001: 226.

How should one formulate a provisional outcome of these findings? Latin was the language of the dominant power, but it was very far from being the dominant language in the Roman east. There is nothing new in this. More important seems to be the fact that Rome and its representatives in the eastern provinces never sought to impose the use of Latin. This is clearly to be concluded from the example of Ephesus and Perge. The mere, but constant, presence of the governor or the financial procurator in a specific city seems never and nowhere to have induced the residents, not even the ambitious and the powerful, who had frequent intercourse with the powers that be, to resort more often to the use of Latin in the types of inscriptions preserved for posterity. When residents of a city, including members of its elite, raised monuments to honour the Roman emperors or Rome's highest representatives, this was done almost without exception in Greek. The rare occasions on which Latin is used are signals for us to look for special reasons. Only within the immediate circle of the administration itself, among the *officiales* of the procurators and the subalterns of the governors, is Latin the norm. And even here the reason is that Latin was the language they used in any case. This is precisely what happened in colonies like Heliopolis, Caesarea, Antiochia in Pisidia or Alexandria Troas.¹³⁰ The leading classes, but not only these, lived with and in this language; and this fact is documented for us in the epigraphic records.

The social status of languages varies. Not everyone held Greek in equal esteem to Latin. In bilingual texts Latin almost always takes precedence over Greek and appears in the first place, leaving Greek in the second rank. Whenever necessary, Latin could vindicate itself as the language of power.¹³¹ This is the reason why milestones were inscribed almost exclusively in Latin down to the third century, even in the east, once the practical bit of information, namely the distance in miles from a specific city, was given in Greek. Last but not least, there is the gigantic arch erected in Tel Shalem to proclaim Rome's victory over the Jews, who had rebelled for the second time in fewer than seventy years under Bar Kokhba; this arch proclaimed its message in Latin letters whose size eclipses that of all other inscriptions known from this province as well as from the rest of the Empire, rivalling only those in Rome.¹³² However, when times

¹³⁰ The following example is symptomatic: the Roman colony of Alexandria Troas erected a statue for Hadrian in Athens. The inscription was written in Latin. Only at the end the name of the townsfolk appears again – in Greek (*ILS* 315). It seems that for a Roman colony the standard language was Latin – even in Athens, the centre of Greek culture.

¹³¹ Eck 2001: 47; Eck 2002a: 29.; Eck 2003b: 125.

¹³² Eck and Foerster 1999: 294; also Eck 2003a: esp. 157.

were normal, Rome could let pass such demonstrations of its dominance through the use of its own language.

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Latin in cities of the Roman Near East¹

Benjamin Isaac

Rabbi Jonathan of Eleutheropolis said:

‘Four languages are appropriately used in the world. And these are: Greek for song. Latin for war. Syriac (Aramaic) for mourning. Hebrew for speaking.’

y. Megilla I 71b, col. 748

Rabbi Jonathan of Eleutheropolis (third century) is the author of this famous statement regarding the respective qualities of the four languages: Greek, Latin, Syriac and Hebrew. According to his view, Greek is most suitable for ‘zemer’, which in this instance means song in the broader sense of the word – poetry.² The other qualifications do not require comments.

In the Roman Near East, various languages were used for written and oral communication. The relative importance of these languages is a topic frequently studied and discussed. Two of the languages were imported by conquerors from the west. Of these, it is clear that Latin, unlike Greek, was never used widely, but it is also obvious that the first language of the Empire played a role in communications. In the present paper I shall attempt to consider the question of the extent to which Latin may have been more than the language of government and military organisation in the cities of the Near East from Pompey to the third century. This is only one aspect – but an important one – of the impact of western, Roman influence on the cities of the Near East.³

The region to be considered for present purposes is more narrowly that of Syria, Judaea/Palaestina and Arabia, excluding the numerous cities of Asia Minor. This is appropriate because the cultural and linguistic differences between these regions are such that a comparison might well result

¹ An early version of this paper was delivered, like the others in this volume, at the conference in Jerusalem in 2003. An expanded version was originally intended for a volume in honour of Fergus Millar, the publication of which was cancelled. The paper in its present state owes much to the diligent and careful editorial work of Richard Alston.

² Lieberman 1994: 21.

³ Clearly, there are other aspects, not to be discussed here, such as the presence of amphitheatres in eastern cities. These are found not just in Roman colonies like Caesarea, but in regular *poleis* such as Scythopolis, Neapolis, Eleutheropolis and Gerasa.

in misleading conclusions. Any attempt to lump them together would ignore essential aspects of linguistic culture and I therefore follow the precedent of major recent works of synthesis, which exclude Anatolia in their treatment of the Roman Near East.⁴ For the present study, this is all the more appropriate because the process of Hellenisation is so markedly different between the various regions. Ephesus on the coast of the Aegean was an important Greek polis from the archaic period onwards. Its language always was Greek and the introduction of Latin as the language of government under the Principate was due to its status as a *conventus* centre, seat of the governor and chief centre for the Roman ruler cult. Perge in Pamphylia may have had its origins as a Hittite city, but its claims to Hellenic status go back centuries before the arrival of Roman rule. The latter is true also for a city like Side. Greek was the norm in those cities. Latin could never achieve predominance, except in communities of Latin-speaking settlers such those in southern Asia Minor.⁵ The situation in the area of the eastern Levant, here to be considered, was different. The city populations and those of the surrounding territories were always linguistically mixed. The local languages were Semitic, and Greek arrived only with the establishment of Seleucid and Ptolemaic rule. While some cities, such as Apamea, Gadara and Ascalon, produced highly respectable Greek intellectuals at some stage and while others certainly wished to be regarded in the Greek heartland as genuinely Greek, there is good evidence to show that this was a vain hope.⁶ The degree of Hellenisation varied and is today often difficult to trace. Whatever the relationship between the local Semitic languages and Greek, Greek was the second language introduced by imperial rulers in this region and Latin was the third. It seems therefore questionable whether the use of Latin can be profitably compared in these two different regions and I will restrict myself to Syria, Judaea-Palaestina and Arabia.⁷

The ancient literature is not very informative on the use of Latin in non-Latin-speaking provinces. In this respect, the situation resembles a related and even larger topic, which is popularly called 'Romanisation', an only apparently transparent term for political, economic and cultural acculturation or the assimilation of subject peoples to Roman imperial

⁴ Millar *Roman Near East*; Ball 2000; Sartre *Alexandre*.

⁵ Levick *Roman Colonies*.

⁶ See the conclusions to this paper, below.

⁷ It will be clear that these assumptions are not shared by my colleague Werner Eck, whose paper in the present volume discusses Anatolian cities for similar purposes. It is clear also that we disagree about the nature of society in Caesarea-on-the-Sea from the Flavian period onwards, and I hope that the contrasting arguments produced in these two papers will eventually contribute to scholarly clarity in these complex matters.

society. For the present, far more modest subject, the obvious material to study is the epigraphic record and this immediately raises the question of the extent to which this is reliable evidence for social and cultural issues beyond that of epigraphic practices themselves. Can we take language use in epigraphic contexts as representative of issues of non-epigraphic language use or cultural identity, for instance?

Language use is determined by many factors, as will be obvious if we think of more recent parallels. In India, Hindi was declared the official language after independence alongside some eighteen officially recognised languages. English, however, in many ways a remnant of British colonial rule, continued to be a widely used *lingua franca*, especially by educated Indians in business, government and academic life, and even more than half a century after independence, the English press remains influential. At another level, English serves as the means of communication between central government and the non-Hindi-speaking states. Yet it remains the first language of only a small percentage of the population. By comparison, in Indonesia, formerly a Dutch colony, Bahasa Indonesia, originally a Malay dialect, was declared the official language and functions as such, though a multitude of other languages are in common use; Dutch has disappeared altogether, apart from a few loanwords. Again, in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, formerly French Indochina, the French language did not penetrate deeply. In countries under German occupation during World War II, German was the language of communication between the occupying powers and the local authorities, but the language did not otherwise penetrate the society of the occupied. It is clear that these differences have been caused by combinations of factors, to be sought in the policies and practices of the rulers, in the social and linguistic situation of the ruled, in the length of time during which the foreign language was officially dominant and, not least, in the circumstances surrounding the ousting of the occupying power. Whatever the reasons, their complexity and the variety of post-occupation linguistic reactions show how cautious we must be in drawing conclusions regarding language use in societies for which the extant evidence is scarce, or in drawing, consciously or unconsciously, on modern parallels in considering the ancient situation.⁸

⁸ There are several extensive older publications on the use of Latin and Greek in the Roman Empire: Hahn 1906: 110–18, 208–23; Hahn 1907; Buturas 1910: 55–8. For the eastern Roman Empire, see Zilliacus 1935. Note the more recent paper by Dubuisson 1982, where it is argued that there was no Roman policy attempting to stimulate, let alone impose, the use of Latin in the provinces.

In assessing the impact of Latin in the Roman Near East, we must keep in mind that there are several mechanisms at work.⁹ First, there are the Roman authorities who used Latin for themselves and sometimes, but not always, Greek in their communications with the locals. Second, there is the Roman army, which functioned mostly in Latin and continued doing so for centuries even when recruitment was overwhelmingly local. Third, there was settlement of speakers of Latin in a few parts of the region. Such settlers were in part drawn from retired soldiers. Finally, it is conceivable that in centres with a substantial Latin-speaking population this language was adopted to some extent by people with Greek or a Semitic language in order to interact with the Latins. This leads us to another large and related topic, that of bilingualism. In the Near East and in many or most of the provinces of the Roman Empire, bilingualism was a widespread phenomenon. Adams' recent study of the role of Latin and bilingualism in Egypt has demonstrated the need for reassessing the available source material for all provinces.¹⁰ In this paper I am concerned with the role of Latin in cities, notably the Roman citizen colonies.¹¹ However, my discussion here is heavily dependent on our understanding of the role of Latin in the army and among the authorities. Concerning language use in the army, Adams concludes:

A persistent misconception is that Latin was the 'official' language of the army... While it is true that service in the army gave recruits, if they were not Latin speakers, the opportunity to acquire the language and although there might have been pressure on them to do so, in that training in the skills of Latin literacy seems to have been provided, some excessively sweeping generalisations have been made about the role of Latin as the official language of the army. (Adams 2003: 599)

Adams cites military documents from Egypt with the aim of showing that Greek was acceptable for official purposes.¹² Latin, however, was, as

⁹ Rochette *Latin*; Eck 2000 discusses several inscriptions from Perge; Eck 2001 and 2003; Schmitt 1983: especially 561–3. Schwartz 1995 is, in spite of its title, concerned only with the use of Hebrew and Aramaic by Jews. For local languages in the Roman Empire see MacMullen 1966 with discussion of the use of Syriac, Coptic, Punic, and Celtic in the Empire. For the (local) languages in Palestine, from 200 BCE until 200 CE see Greenfield 1978: 143–54 with responses by Youtie 1978 and Peters 1978a. Rosén 1980: 219 claims that Latin had only administrative significance in Roman Palestine. Schmitt 1983 states that in Syria Latin was used only in the army and in Berytus.

¹⁰ Adams, Janse and Swain *Bilingualism*; Adams *Bilingualism*.

¹¹ Rochette *Latin* does not seriously discuss the subject at hand.

¹² Adams 2002: 602: 'There was no rigid adherence to a policy of using Latin for public documents in the army; on the contrary, there were occasions when a decision was taken to use Greek instead.' Adams 2002: 607: 'Greek was acceptable for record keeping even if there was a scribe to hand who

formulated by Adams, 'a sort of supreme or super-high language in the army, which was bound to be used in certain circumstances, e.g. correspondence with the Emperor'.¹³ Or, as formulated by Valerius Maximus in a frequently cited passage:

Magistratus uero prisci quantopere suam populique Romani maiestatem retinentes se gesserint hinc cognosci potest, quod inter cetera obtinendae grauitatis indicia illud quoque magna cum perseuerantia custodiebant, ne Graecis umquam nisi latine responsa darent. quin etiam ipsos linguae uolubilitate, qua plurimum ualent, excussa per interpretem loqui cogeabant non in urbe tantum nostra, sed etiam in Graecia et Asia, quo scilicet Latinae uocis honos per omnes gentes uenerabilior diffunderetur. nec illis deerant studia doctrinae, sed nulla non in re pallium togae subici debere arbitrabantur, indignum esse existimantes inlecebris et suauitati litterarum imperii pondus et auctoritatem donari.

How carefully the magistrates of old regulated their conduct to keep intact the majesty of the Roman people and their own can be seen from the fact that among other indications of their duty to preserve dignity they steadfastly kept to the rule never to make replies to Greeks except in Latin. Indeed they obliged the Greeks themselves to discard the volubility, which is their greatest asset, and speak through an interpreter, not only in Rome but in Greece and Asia also, intending no doubt that the dignity of Latin speech be the more widely venerated throughout all nations... (thinking) it unmeet that the weight and authority of empire be sacrificed to the seductive charm of letters. (2.2.2; trans. Shackleton-Bailey)

All this may have been true for the 'old magistrates' but it follows that it was no longer the reality of the first century CE when Valerius Maximus wrote these lines.¹⁴ The same is true for a rather similar pronouncement by John the Lydian.¹⁵

Since the cities of the east have not produced the abundance of papyri available for Egypt, we must have recourse to the inscriptions on stone,

could have used Latin.' Adams 2002: 608: 'matters of an official kind were regularly handled in Greek, both in dealings with outsiders to the unit and in internal record keeping'.

¹³ Adams 2002: 608–17. The *dux Aegypti* did not respond in Latin when he received a petition in Greek. Latin would be used when a superior wished to assert his power over a subordinate, or when a subordinate wished to make a potent appeal to a higher authority. It was used for the transmission of orders, receipts and promissory notes, *diplomata*, dedications to emperors. The incidents often cited in this respect may be more significant as exceptions than as a true reflection of the rule of behaviour. These are described by Suetonius, *Tiberius* 71: describing Tiberius' reluctance to use Greek loanwords in the Senate, he also relates that the emperor prohibited a soldier to give testimony in Greek. Suetonius, *Claudius* 16.2, reports that Claudius removed a Greek dignitary from the list of jurors and also took away his Roman citizenship because he did not know Latin. Dio 60.17.4 says he was a Lycian.

¹⁴ As observed by Dubuisson 1982: 195.

¹⁵ Joannes Laurentius Lydus, *de Magistratibus populi Romani*, 2.12 and 3.42; cf. Dubuisson 1982: 196; Maas 1992: 25, 32, 87.

of which many have been found.¹⁶ Clearly, however, the usual type of public inscriptions encountered in the inscriptions of the Roman east do not require any serious knowledge of the language and are not evidence of the language commonly spoken or written by those who set them up. Nevertheless, the languages used for public declarations of political, cultural and social identity in the various cities of the Roman east are important in themselves.

In the present paper, therefore, I shall consider the various categories of inscriptions in Latin that are found in a number of cities of the Roman east and attempt to formulate conclusions about the use of this language in documents meant to be read by or displayed to the public. The analysis depends very much on the availability of published material. Preservation and publication are very uneven for the various cities of the region, and this, of course, raises methodological issues when considering the relative incidence of Latin inscriptions at the various sites. In spite of the paucity of evidence, one category excluded from the analysis is inscribed milestones. Since these were formal texts set up by the army on instructions from the provincial authorities, they were obviously in Latin. By the end of the second century, in the reign of Severus, we find the first milestones which use Greek, in particular for distances.¹⁷ The reason for this is that the responsibility for the maintenance of the road system and, with it, the erection of milestones, fell increasingly upon the local authorities and has more to do with the development of provincial administration than with the topic at hand. In the remaining categories of Latin inscriptions from the eastern cities and their territories, my analysis attempts to determine whether their erection and the choice of language in the inscriptions were the responsibility of the Roman authorities, such as the governor and procurator and their staffs; the Roman army, either active-duty soldiers or officers; veterans, either of local origin or settled after service in the area; local civilian speakers of Latin who may have been descendants of veterans settled in Roman citizen colonies or local citizens who served in the army and their relatives; or other civilians.

The use of Latin is more expected if army personnel and provincial authorities are involved, and it is thus of particular interest to attempt to assess the use of the language outside those circles. We know that Latin was used to some extent in eastern cities with colonial status, as is clear from their coin inscriptions as well as from the fairly numerous inscriptions

¹⁶ Adams *Bilingualism*: 617: 'An epitaph might be seen as the ultimate definition of a person's identity.'

¹⁷ Cf. Isaac 1998b: 62–5. Tetrarchic milestones and those of Constantine and his colleagues are usually in Latin.

on stone published so far. The point of interest is whether and why local civilians from these cities set up inscriptions in Latin, and whether we can establish any kind of social context for those epigraphic Latinists.

The Roman colonies in the east were, like those in the west, either genuine veteran colonies such as Berytus (which presumably at first included Heliopolis and vicinity), Acco-Ptolemais and Aelia Capitolina, or titular colonies, the most important of which for our purposes are Caesarea-on-the-Sea, Bostra and Gerasa. Veteran colonies were reorganised at the time of the foundation, and veterans from the Roman legions were settled there and received land. They formed a local elite imposed upon the existing communities. By contrast, the titular colonies were established through political reorganisation and a change in status, unaccompanied by the settlement of veterans or other foreigners. There is therefore an essential difference: the establishment of a veteran colony represented a serious disruption of social and economic life in a community and the imposition of a foreign upper class.¹⁸

HELIOPOLIS-BALBEK

The fullest, most accessible, and therefore instructive collection is that of Heliopolis-Baalbek. The legal status of Heliopolis in the first and second centuries CE should not concern us here. It was either founded as a separate colony by Augustus or was part of the territory of Berytus, founded by Augustus no later than 14 BCE. In the reign of Severus, it is on record as a separate colony.¹⁹ Whatever the case, the city was occupied by veterans of the legions V Macedonica and VIII Augusta in the time of Augustus. In spite of this early occupation by veterans, the earliest imperial texts from the region are relatively late: two rock-cut inscriptions along the Heliopolis–Damascus road which mention Nero.²⁰ In the town the earliest dated inscription mentions Vespasian on a dedication.²¹

¹⁸ It will suffice to refer to the establishment of the veteran colony at Camulodunum (Colchester). Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.32, states that a strong body of veterans was installed on expropriated land and describes vividly the procedure: the veterans ejected Britons from their homes, confiscated their land and treated them as slaves. The town was ‘the seat of servitude’ in the eyes of the Britons and we are told of their fierce hatred of the veterans. Elsewhere, in a speech which Tacitus puts in the mouth of Arminius, the leader of the Germanic revolt, the essence of Roman provincial rule is expressed by the phrase *dominos et colonias novas*. *Ann.* 1.59.8. Appian, *BC* 5.12–14, describes problems caused by the settlement of veterans in Italy. The walls of Colonia Agrippinensis (Cologne) are referred to as *munimenta servitii* (Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.64).

¹⁹ References and discussion by Rey-Coquais 1967: 34, n. 9 (for references to earlier discussion) and Rey-Coquais 1978; Millar 1990: 10–23; 31–4 and *passim*; Isaac 1992: 318–21; 342–4.

²⁰ *IGLS* VI 2968. ²¹ *IGLS* VI 2762.

There are 306 inscriptions in Greek and Latin from the town, the sanctuary and the vicinity, of which 131 are in Latin.²² The exceptional nature of the Latin epigraphic record becomes obvious if we compare this corpus of inscriptions to that from the major city of Emesa, which has not produced a single Latin inscription, apart from milestones and boundary stones.²³ Yet one might have expected Emesa to produce some Latin texts since its citizens served in units named after the city and at least one of those was a *cohors milliaria c(ivium) R(omanorum)*.²⁴ The first group of inscriptions from Heliopolis to be mentioned are dedications to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus. There are nineteen of those, two of them erected by military men²⁵ and two by freedmen.²⁶ Then there are fourteen inscriptions on statue bases for emperors; on four of these the donors are private individuals. Two inscriptions record dedications to kings: Sohaemus of Emesa and Agrippa (either I or II), who apparently had a close relationship with the colony.²⁷ There are also five inscriptions in honour of provincial governors. For three of these it is not clear who dedicated them. Of the inscriptions with known dedicators, one was set up by the governor's *equites singulares*, the other (2779) by a centurion of the legio VII Gemina. Such dedications could have come from any urban centre which the governor regularly visited. Finally, there are forty-five inscriptions in Latin which mention people of local origin (as distinct from military personnel or officials who were not citizens of the colony, but present temporarily on duty). Two of these were members of senatorial families.²⁸ One remarkable equestrian career is recorded on a

²² All numbers derive from the collection in *IGLS* VI.

²³ *IGLS* V (Émésène). Latin boundary stones: nos. 2549, 2552. Milestones: 2672, 2674–6; see also 2704, 2708. Cf. Millar *Roman Near East*: 300–9.

²⁴ Fitz 1972.

²⁵ *IGLS* VI 2711, dated 212–17 CE, by Aurelius Antonius Longinus, a *speculator* of the legio III Gal., stationed at Raphanaeae. The name is characteristic of a recent grant of citizenship and it is therefore not clear what connection the dedicant had with Heliopolis. There is no such doubt in the case of L. Antonius Silo (no. 2714, 128–38 CE), *equus* of the III Aug., Heliopolitanus, by his heirs, all four of the *tribus Fabia*, and therefore also Heliopolitans.

²⁶ *IGLS* VI 2713, origin not certain, and 2719.

²⁷ *IGLS* VI 2760. For Sohaemus: "*Patronus Coloniae* . . . set up by L Vitellius L f Fab Sossianus". *IGLS* VI 2759 for Agrippa: *patronus coloniae*.

²⁸ *IGLS* VI 2795: T. Statilius Maximus, for whose senatorial career, see comments ad loc. A relative of his, Titus Statilius Maximus Bromiacus, is attested at Berytus (see below). *IGLS* VI 2797: a senatorial descendant of the equestrian officer C. Velius Rufus, honoured in *IGLS* VI 2796. *IGLS* VI 2795 mentions a member of a senatorial family which produced three consuls in the second century and is also mentioned at Berytus. *IGLS* VI 2796; 2798. Cf. Bowersock 1982: esp. 665–6, nos. 16–18. Note also *IGLS* VI 2785 honouring Sex. Attius Suburanus, twice consul under Trajan. The inscription dates to the end of the first century, while he was still an *equus*. There is no evidence of a personal connection with Heliopolis apart from this dedication by the brothers of his *cornicularius*.

statue base, 2796, for C. Velius Rufus, clearly from Heliopolis, who was active in the second half of the first century. Several of his descendants were senators. There are two other equestrian careers: 2781, recording the career of L. Antonius Naso, who became a tribune of the praetorian guard and procurator.²⁹ The second is recorded on two statue bases (2793; 2794): P. Statilius Justus Sentianus, who was *praefectus fabrum* and tribune of the legio II Traiana as well as *decurio coloniae*. Nine inscriptions refer to military careers of local men below the equestrian level.³⁰ Five other Latin inscriptions mention locally significant men with Roman names who did not, apparently, have imperial careers outside the city.³¹ Twenty-one fragmentary Latin inscriptions are too far gone to be instructive for the present topic.

No less significant is the number of Latin inscriptions from the vicinity of Heliopolis, which shows that there were Latin speakers, clearly descendants of the original colonists and locals, who were integrated with their families in the territory of the colony. I count twenty-three private individuals, twelve of them identified by their *tria nomina*.³² Remarkable is a dedication on an altar for 'Iupiter Optimus Beelseddes' by three men, named Viveius Cand(idus?), Septimius Sator(ninus) and Adrus (2925). We may note also a boundary stone of a village from the territory.³³ Eleven additional Latin inscriptions are too fragmentary for profitable interpretation.

Of special interest is the material from Niha, in the Beqa' Valley, where a series of inscriptions in Latin records the existence of a sanctuary of the

²⁹ Cf. Rey-Coquais 1967: no. 2761, where it is suggested that Antonius Taurus, mentioned on the base of a statue of Vespasian, is the tribune of the praetorians mentioned by Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.20, together with Antonius Naso. In that case, we would have another Heliopolitan *eques*.

³⁰ *IGLS* VI 2782: a *primus pilus*; *IGLS* VI 2783: a centurion; *IGLS* VI 2786 and 2787: L. Gerellanus who became *primus pilus* of the legio X Fretensis and *praefectus castrorum* of the legio XII Fulminata fulfilled functions in the colony. The statues were set up by respectively a centurion of legio X Fretensis and M. Antonius Sosipatrus, a friend. 2789: a statue of a *hastatus* of the XIII Gemina set up by his son, a centurion of the I Adiutrix. Their connection with Heliopolis is not clear. 2798: a fragmentary inscription on a statue base for a *primus pilus* who was honoured by the city, perhaps because he was of local origin. *IGLS* VI 2844 is the epitaph of a *protector*, by his brother, also a *protector* (late third century). It is not unlikely that they were local citizens. 2788 is too fragmentary to tell us anything, apart from the rank of the honorand.

³¹ *IGLS* VI 2780; 2784; 2790–2.

³² *IGLS* VI 2898: M. Rufus Valens Honoratus; 2904: C. Antonius Abimmes. For this Aramaic name, see the comments on pp.181–2; *IGLS* VI 2911: M. Cl. Cornelianus; 2921: M. Sentius Valens and his son; 2922: L. Licinius Felix; 2923: Q. Baebius Rufus; 2949: L. Servius Rufinus; 2953: C. Iulius Magnus, son of Rufus (dated by the consuls of 96 CE); 2955: epitaph of Cn. Iulius Rufus, *primus pilus*, probably father of the previous; 2956: L. Iulius Li(g)us; 2966: C. Aetrios Cresces Mundus and his family; 2976: M. Longinus Falcidianus.

³³ *IGLS* VI 2894: *Oblig(atum)* or *Oblig(ata) Caphargmi*.

Syrian Goddess of Niha, Hadaranes or Atargatis.³⁴ One of those mentions the *Pagus Augustus*, presumably an association of Latin-speaking Roman citizens which will have been settled there at the time of the foundation of the Roman colony. At this sanctuary some evidence of social integration has been detected.³⁵ The sanctuary preserved its indigenous character, and the gods did not receive Graeco-Roman names. In contrast to the sanctuary at Heliopolis itself, the priests and prophetesses were *per-egrini*, but the inscriptions also mention at least six Roman citizens and their relatives.³⁶ A sanctuary nearby is identified by a dedication in Latin to the god Mifsenus.³⁷

Finally we ought to notice a number of relevant inscriptions from other regions of the Empire.³⁸ They record citizens from Heliopolis as serving soldiers and officers in various regions.³⁹

The figures above are not in themselves statistically significant but they do show that some Roman citizens of local origin in Heliopolis used Latin on public monuments. These Romans belong to various social classes, from senatorial and equestrian families to families who use a mixture of Semitic, Greek and Roman personal names, but all preferred to use Latin for their public declarations. We encounter some military careers at lower and middle levels, again of people of proven local origin, both in Heliopolis and its vicinity, and in other parts of the Empire. Particularly in the surrounding territory, we also encounter some evidence of integration and mixed culture. All this is what one would expect of an eastern citizen colony where a substantial group of veterans settled in close proximity

³⁴ *IGLS* VI 2936. The inscriptions from Niha are *IGLS* VI 2928–45. For *pagi*, country districts or communities attached to cities and *vici*, rural settlements, *RE* xviii, 2318–39. For *pagi* at Ptolemais see below.

³⁵ Cf. Rey-Coquais 1987: esp. 198–207, pl. II–IV, 1.

³⁶ *IGLS* VI 2928; 2929 (bilingual), set up by a veteran, Sex. Allius Iullus. Note also *IGLS* VI 2933: L. Iulius Apollinaris; also 2937 (fragmentary); 2938(?); 2940 (Greek), mentioning the sons of C. Clodius Marcellus. The sons have Semitic names; 2942: Q. Vesius Petilianus, *flamen aug(ustalis)* and *decurio Berytensis, quaestor col col.*; 2943: Q. Vesius M[agnus]; 2944: L. Vesius Verecundus.

³⁷ *IGLS* VI 2946, cf. Rey-Coquais 1987: 203. In charge are five persons with Aramaic names and four with Roman names (*praenomina* only).

³⁸ Cited in *IGLS* VI p. 40.

³⁹ Trebonius Sossianus appears in Rome as *centurio frumentarius* of the legio III Fl(aviae) Gordianae (*ILS* 4287) and later as *primus pilus* in Philippopolis (*ILS* 9005). *CIL* VIII 18084, lines 75; 92: M. Domitius Valens and M. Atilius Saturninus are soldiers of the legio III Augusta in Lambaesis. Since these date to the early second century and are described as ‘Heliop(olitanus)’ it has been suggested that this might be evidence of the existence of the city as a separate colony by that time (Rey-Coquais 1967: 35). Picard 1945: 198, 22B, left column, line 11: [*S*]aturnin[us] in c[olonia] Helub (Heliopoli), as read by H.-G. Pflaum. *CIL* VI 2385.5, line 14: [*Hel*]iopo[li] on a list of praetorians in Rome. Interesting is also *CIL* X 1579; *ILS* 4291 indicating the existence of a *corpus Heliopolitanorum* at Puteoli.

with Greek- and Semitic-speaking others. The situation resulted in a tendency in individuals to use Latin on private monuments, even if they were not of the original group of veteran settlers or their direct descendants.

BERYTUS

A city most charming that has law schools which assure the stability of all of the Roman legal system. Thence learned men come who assist judges all over the world and protect the provinces with their knowledge of the laws.⁴⁰

Although there is far less published material from Berytus than from Heliopolis, the pattern of what there is resembles that of Heliopolis. The *Expositio Totius Mundi* describes Berytus as being a 'city rather Roman in character'.⁴¹ The planned corpus of inscriptions from the city is not yet available. Veterans were settled at Berytus at the same time as at Heliopolis, in 14 BCE by Agrippa.⁴² The existence of a distinguished school, or schools, of Roman law at Berytus has always been seen as an indication of the Latin character of this town from the third century until the end of the fourth century.⁴³ A famous inscription, originally set up at Berytus, honours an equestrian officer who, in the course of his career, was dispatched by the governor of Syria at the beginning of the first century to destroy a fortress of the Ituraeans in the mountains of the Lebanon.⁴⁴ The inscription is relevant for our topic because the officer later became *quaestor*, *aedilis*, *duumvir* and *pontifex* of the colony.

There is evidence of at least two senators from Berytus, which shows that it produced members of the imperial upper class.⁴⁵ Four (or possibly

⁴⁰ *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* (ed. Jean Rougé) 25: <Post istam> Berytus, civitas valde deliciosa et auditoria legum habens per quam omnia iudicia Romanorum <stare videntur>. Inde enim viri docti in omnem orbem terrarum adsident iudicibus et scientes leges custodiunt provincias.

⁴¹ Gregorius Thaumaturgus, *Orat. Panegy. ad Origenem* 5. PG 10, col. 1066: πόλις Ῥωμαϊκότερα πῶς, καὶ τῶν νόμων τοῦτων εἶναι πιστευθεῖσα παιδευτήριον.

⁴² Some veterans were established there at an earlier date, after Actium and before 27: *CIL* III 14165.6. For Berytus, see Lauffray 1978: 135–63; Millar 1990: 10–18.

⁴³ Collinet 1925 is merely the last of a venerable series of works published since the seventeenth century, listed by Collinet 1925: 6–9; Millar 1990: 16–17; Rochette *Latin*: 167–74. Other centres were Alexandria and Antioch: Rochette *Latin*: 174–7. For the substitution of Greek for Latin as the language of legal instruction, see Collinet 1925: 211–18. The school functioned till the mid-sixth century. Most of the literary sources which shed light on the institution are later than the period considered in the present paper. There are a few from the third century (Collinet 1925: 26–30) and more from the fourth (at 30–42).

⁴⁴ *CIL* III 6687; *ILS* 2683; Boffo 1994: 182–203, no. 23; Cf. Isaac 1992: 60–2.

⁴⁵ Bowersock 1982: nos. 11 and 12: M. and S. Sentius Proculus, possibly brothers. Cf. Rey-Coquais 1992 = *AE* 1992: 1689.

five) equestrian officers are attested as originating from Berytus.⁴⁶ Two (or possibly) three of these refer to the only attested first-century equestrian officers from Syria. The number of attested equestrian officers from this town was surpassed only by Palmyra in the second century.⁴⁷

I am aware of twenty-three inscriptions representing private individuals setting up dedications to gods in Latin on their own behalf.⁴⁸ We find only purely Latin personal names on thirteen of these, but on eight the names are a combination of Latin and Greek or Semitic. The former reflect a tradition of Roman nomenclature which goes back to the settlement of veterans in the city, while the latter could either mean that local families received the citizenship or that descendants of the group of citizens intermarried with local families. Both must have happened regularly, but it is interesting to see it reflected in the personal names. Next there are nine epitaphs or statue dedications with inscriptions in Latin.⁴⁹ Four of these represent private persons with fully Latin names, one of them recording those of freedmen and one a soldier. One inscription has a mixture of Latin and Greek names.

There are a few relevant inscriptions from other parts of the Empire: the worshippers of Jupiter Heliopolitanus from Berytus who lived in Puteoli (*CIL* III 6680; *ILS* 300) and a dedication from Nîmes to this god and to the god Nemausus by a *primipilaris* from Berytus (*ILS* 4288).

For Berytus the limited epigraphic material confirms the impression derived from the literary sources that this was a substantial Roman veteran colony where the Latin tradition was maintained for centuries after the foundation. The city produced some members of the higher classes and some of its citizens expressed themselves in Latin on public monuments and had proper Roman names.

⁴⁶ Devijver 1986: 183.

⁴⁷ Devijver 1986. For military inscriptions see further *CIL* III 14165/6; *AE* 1998: 1435: career inscription of a centurion, probably a local man (*tribus Fabia*), mentioned also in *IGLS* VI 2955, 2956, first half of the second century.

⁴⁸ Seyrig 1934: 5; Seyrig 1946: 46–7, no. 18; 48, no. 19; *CIL* III 14165/5; 9; *AE* 1900: 191; 1903: 361, for which see also 1905, p. 7: the dedicator, Q. Antonius Eutyches, appears also on another dedication: 1924: 138; 1905: 29; 1906: 188 and p. 41; 1906: 189 and 190; 1922: 60; 1924: 137; 1926: 56; 1939: 69; 1950: 231; 1950: 233: a dedication to *Fortunae Geni coloniae* by M(arcus) Iulius Avidius Minervinus from Emesa; 1955: 85: one slave made a vow and another placed the dedication; 1957: 118; 1958: 164; 1998: 1436: a private dedication in Latin to *I.O.M.H.* by Q. Longinus, a freedman. 1437: another freedman.

⁴⁹ *AE* 1898: 20; 1906: 189; 1907: 191; 1926: 61; 1939: 68; 1947: 143; 1950: 230; 1958: 162. 1928: 62 = 1954, p. 77 s. n. 258; 1947, p. 49 s. n. 135 is the famous text: *Regina Berenice regis magni A[grippae] f[ilia] et rex Agrippa templum?* / *[quod] rex Herodes proavos(!) eorum fecerat veftustate conlapsam a solo restituerunt* / *marmoribusque et columnis [se]x [exornaverunt]*.

PTOLEMAIS (ACCO)

The next veteran colony established in the region was Ptolemais.⁵⁰ Veterans of the four Syrian legions were settled in a new colony at Ptolemais between 51/2 and 54, and a new road was constructed from Antioch in Syria to the colony.⁵¹ Ulpian describes Ptolemais as lying between Palaestina and Syria.⁵² The foundation of the colony involved the usual thorough reorganisation of the territory and land grants to veterans. The land, whether bought or confiscated, was taken from its original possessors and the infusion of veterans entailed the imposition of a new local leadership. The site of the ancient town has been occupied continuously since antiquity. As in Jerusalem, there are therefore very few inscriptions, but the few that have been discovered do not contradict the pattern one might expect to see if there had been more evidence.⁵³ As noted above, the imposition of the veteran colony was a measure which had a drastic impact on the existing community and cannot have been welcome. There is one hint that families of distinction may have lived in the city. It produced at least one distinguished person: the consular Flavius Boethus, governor of Palestine, 162–6 CE, known from the works of Galen as a scholar and philosopher with an interest in medicine.⁵⁴

CAESAREA-ON-THE-SEA

The case of Caesarea is difficult as the nature of and reason for the grant of colonial status to the city are not clearly established. It became a colony in the reign of Vespasian but it is a matter of debate whether this change

⁵⁰ See Kadman 1961; Makhoully and Johns 1946; Seyrig 1962a; 1962b; Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: II, 121–5; see also Avi-Yonah 1978–8: i, 14–23; Avi-Yonah 1976, *s.u.*, 89; Isaac 1980–81: 37–9 = *Near East*: 92–4; Millar 1990: 23–6.

⁵¹ The last pre-colonial coin issue of Ptolemais dates from 51/2 CE: Kadman 1961: nos. 86–90, p. 108; Seyrig, 1962b: 39. For further bibliography see Kindler and Stein 1987: 5–18. The foundation by Claudius (died 54) is mentioned by Pliny, *NH* 5.17.75: *Colonia Claudi Caesaris Ptolemais, quae quondam Accae*. Milestones of 56 record the construction of a road *ab Antiochea ad novam coloniam Ptolemaida*. See Goodchild 1948–9: esp. 120. For the legions, see the founder's coins with *vexilla*, 66 CE, see Kadman 1961: no. 92.

⁵² Ulpian, *Dig.* 50.15.1.3: *Ptolemaesium enim colonia, quae inter Phoenicem et Palaestinam sita est, nihil praeter nomen coloniae habet*. That is, the colony had no additional financial privileges, such as the *ius Italicum*, or the exemptions from taxation enjoyed by Caesarea and Aelia Capitolina. Perhaps it received *ius Italicum* in the reign of Elagabalus, for city coins of his reign show Marsyas (Kadman 1961: no. 163).

⁵³ See Avi-Yonah 1946: 85, n. 2: *Imp. Ner. Caesari Col. Ptol. Veter. Vici Nea Com. et Gedru*; 86, n. 3: *Pago Vicinal(i)*, which shows that the territory, like that of Heliopolis, was organized in *pagi*. See also Soreq 1975. A centurial *cippus* was found a kilometre and a half south of the first inscription, see Meyer 1983–4 with Applebaum 1983–4. A fragment of another Latin inscription was found not far from this spot, Meyer 1983–4: 117.

⁵⁴ See references in Smallwood 1981: 552.

in status was accompanied by the settlement of legionary veterans.⁵⁵ There is good evidence for the existence of several honorary or titular colonies from the reign of Claudius at the latest, so Caesarea would definitely not have been the first case of a grant of colonial status without settlement of veterans and the literary and archaeological evidence, though capable of a different interpretation, cumulatively points to Caesarea not receiving a veteran settlement.⁵⁶ Most explicitly, *Digest*. 50.15.8 states that *Divus Vespasianus Caesarienses colonos fecit* ('the divine Vespasian made the people of Caesarea *coloni*'), suggesting that the existing Caesareans became citizens of the new Roman colony. Given that this is a legal source, the phrasing may be significant, though it is possible that the source is confused, conflating generally later practice in creating 'honorary' colonies with generally earlier practice in establishing veteran settlements. Yet the best informed contemporary source, Josephus, explicitly denies that Vespasian founded any city of his own in Judaea: 'For he founded there no city of his own while keeping their territory [i.e. the land of the Jews], but only to eight hundred veterans did he assign a place for settlement called Emmaus.'⁵⁷ This would seem clearly to exclude the establishment of a veteran settlement at Caesarea.

⁵⁵ I have argued that Caesarea received colonial status without receiving a contingent of veteran settlers in the article published in Isaac 1980–81: 87–111. A different scenario has now been proposed by Cotton and Eck 2002, who argue that the epigraphic evidence indicates the presence of a group of veteran settlers in the city, planted there at the time of the change in status. See also Eck in the present volume.

⁵⁶ Vittinghoff 1994 notes that 'die "Titularkolonie"' is rare before the end of the first century, but perhaps was granted already under Caesar to especially meritorious peregrine communities. Cassius Dio 43.39.5, referring to Spain in 45 BCE states: 'to those who had displayed any good-will toward him he granted lands and exemption from taxation, to some also citizenship, and to others the status of Roman colonists (ἔδωκε . . . πολιτείαν τέ τισι, καὶ ἄλλους ἀποίκους τῶν Ῥωμαίων νομιζεσθαι)'. This could refer, according to Vittinghoff 1994: 35, n. 44, to Nova Carthago, Ucubi and Tarraco, unless Dio is anachronistic here. Caesarea in Mauretania was possibly also a Claudian titular colony; cf. Pliny, *NH* 5.20: *oppidum . . . Caesarea Iubae regia a divo Claudio coloniae iure donata – eiusdem iussu deductis veteranis Oppidum Novum*. There can be no doubt regarding the case of Vienna in Gaul (Vittinghoff 1994: 36, with note 48). Vienna was promoted from a colony with the *ius Latii* to a titular *Colonia Civium Romanorum*. The date is uncertain, but the Latin status was probably granted by Caesar, following Vittinghoff, and the status of a full citizen colony was no later than 41 CE. This is clear from Claudius' speech in Lyon: *CIL* XIII 1668; *ILS* 212; *FIRA* I 43: *Ante in domum consulatum intulit quam colonia sua solidum civitatis Romanae beneficium consecuta est*. Vienna is known as *Colonia Romana* to Pliny, *NH* 3.36, but not to Strabo 4.186. Puteoli received colonial status from Nero: Tac. *Ann.* 14.27: *vetus oppidum Puteoli ius coloniae et cognomentum a Nerone apiscuntur*; cf. Vittinghoff 1994: 35, n. 44. See also Sherwin-White 1973: 244.

⁵⁷ Jos. *BJ* 7.6.6 (216): οὐ γὰρ κατῴκησεν ἐκεῖ πόλιν ἰδίαν αὐτῷ τὴν χώραν φυλλάτων, ὀκτακοσίους δὲ μόνοις ἀπὸ τῆς στρατιᾶς διαφειμένοις χωρίον ἔδωκεν εἰς κατοίκησιν, ὃ καλεῖται μὲν Ἀμμαούς. Cf. Isaac 1998a: 114. Pliny, *NH* 5.13.69: *Stratonis turris, eadem Caesarea ab Herode rege condita, nunc colonia prima Flavia a Vespasiano imperatore deducta* might (but need not) be construed as implying veteran settlement, but this passage should clearly be regarded as less significant than the two sources cited above.

The absence of clear archaeological or iconographic evidence of a military settlement is also persuasive. Founder's coins with legionary *vexilla* and symbols are invariably found among coins of the eastern veteran colonies. Accordingly, they are frequent on the coins of Berytus, Acco and Aelia Capitolina, but are absent on those of Caesarea.⁵⁸ There is also no evidence in the vicinity of Caesarea of centuriation, such as is found at Acco (see below). The absence of centuriation suggests that there was no reorganisation or redistribution of land in the territory of the city consonant with the arrival of new settlers.

The grant of colonial status could result from two vastly different historical scenarios. Briefly, the granting of 'honorary' colonial status can be seen as a reward for political loyalty while the implanting of veterans on a community, with the economic and political disruption this entailed, should be seen as a punishment. The introduction of a foreign elite over and above the existing non-Jewish population definitely would have been punishment, even if landed property from Jews had become available for distribution after the suppression of the Jewish revolt. There was indeed every reason not to punish the citizens of Caesarea, but to reward them. They had supported the Roman army, killed many Jews, and it was the place where Vespasian had been proclaimed Emperor (hence the name *prima Flavia*). Such a reward would parallel the lesser honours granted to smaller towns in the aftermath of 70. Ma'abartha at the foot of Mt Gerizim was founded as the city of Flavia Neapolis (Nablus).⁵⁹ Jaffa received the name of Flavia Joppa.⁶⁰ Both towns had been ravaged during the war. It is worth observing that, elsewhere in the wider region, Samosata, the old royal capital of Commagene, annexed by Vespasian, became 'Flavia Samosata', but did not receive colonial status.⁶¹ Additionally, it is difficult to find advantages for Vespasian in establishing a veteran colony at Caesarea. Such colonies had no useful military function; on the contrary, in wartime they had to be protected by the regular troops.⁶² A group of elderly veterans had nothing to contribute to the security of the province of Judaea. In fact, the presence of veteran colonists would have had an adverse effect: forming an irritant

⁵⁸ Werner Eck regards the absence of such coins in the case of Caesarea as insignificant, arguing that they are to be expected only from the mints of colonies established during the period of large-scale discharges following the civil wars (pp. 34–5 of this volume). However, both Claudian Acco and Hadrianic Aelia Capitolina produced such coins, and I therefore conclude that the failure to do so by the mint of Caesarea after 70 CE is indeed indicative.

⁵⁹ Jos. *BJ* 3.8.32 (307–15); for the (re)foundation, see Hill 1914: 45–7, nos. 1–19, and pp. xxvi–xxvii. The civic era began in 72/3. Cf. Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: I. 520–1.

⁶⁰ Jos. *BJ* 2.18.10 (507–9); 3.9.2–4 (414–31); Hill 1914: 44, nos. 1–2, cf. pp. xxiv–xxv.

⁶¹ Wroth 1899: 117–23.

⁶² Isaac 1992: chapter 7, and see now the discussion for Asia Minor by Brélaz 2004.

among people who had formed a bulwark of support for Rome among the Jewish insurgents. Furthermore, Caesarea was a prosperous urban centre that did not need reinforcement, unlike Jerusalem, sacked and not rebuilt, and seen by Hadrian, sixty years afterwards, as ripe for development.

Even the presence in fair numbers of veterans and soldiers at Caesarea cannot be taken as conclusive evidence for the planting of a veteran colony. As is stated by Josephus, Caesarea (and Sebaste) supplied numerous recruits for special units of the provincial army before 70 CE – another reason to reward the city. There is every reason to assume that the same population continued to do so after 70, when they could do so as Roman citizens. In fact, they could serve in the provincial legions and would increasingly have done so as local recruitment became the norm, at least in the second century. These recruits would have tended to use Latin like other members of the military and this can serve as sufficient explanation for any use of Latin by private persons on inscriptions in Caesarea. How little we know of linguistic usage in first-century Judaea will be clear also from the fact that we do not know what would have been the first language of such military men: did they speak Greek at home? or Aramaic? Did they speak Greek or Latin in daily life in the army?

The literary sources, few as they are, the coins and the historical circumstances all strongly suggest that Caesarea received colonial status as a reward and was spared the establishment of a contingent of veteran legionaries in the city. The argument in support of the claim that it was a genuine veteran colony can only be based on the Latin inscriptions discovered in the city.⁶³ The systematic excavations carried out in the city have uncovered a large number of those: a total of 411 inscriptions have been published and more than 200 others are awaiting publication, which makes a full assessment impossible at present.⁶⁴ Of the 411 published some 69 are in Latin. To these will eventually be added some 120 Latin inscriptions that have been discovered since the cut-off date of the corpus of Lehmann and Holum, which is 1992. Many of these are very fragmentary. It is clear, however, that with so much unpublished material still inaccessible, this is not the stage to attempt a full evaluation. Even with all the inscriptions published, there will be a serious problem of method. Caesarea was not only a Roman colony; it was also the provincial capital,

⁶³ Gregorius Thaumaturgus travelled to Caesarea to study Roman law there, rather than in Berytus as he had wanted originally: *Panegy. ad Origenem* 5, PG 10.1067f. The fact that one could study Roman law in Caesarea in the third century is certainly significant, but it is no indication that there was a presence of Roman veterans in the first century.

⁶⁴ Lehmann and Holum 2000.

the seat of both the governor and the financial procurator. Moreover, it was not far from the legionary base of the VI Ferrata at Legio. We must therefore assume that a substantial number of Latin inscriptions was to be expected there anyway from those circles, as in Bostra and Gerasa (see below), where no planting of veteran settlers occurred.

For the purposes of analysis, the inscriptions can be divided into the following categories:

1. Inscriptions related to the imperial or provincial authorities and their officials. These normally have nothing to do with the city or local society as such.
2. Military monuments, related to the provincial garrison and military personnel attached to the governor's office. Again, such inscriptions are frequently unconnected with the city and its permanent inhabitants.
3. Public inscriptions, related to or set up by the city authorities. These, like the city coinage, ought to be in Latin because of the colonial status of the city. Such a use of Latin does not prove that the language had roots in the local population.
4. Public building inscriptions.
5. Inscriptions set up by and for private individuals.

Only texts belonging to category 5 might be taken as unambiguously reflecting Latinity and 'Romanisation' among the citizens of Caesarea. In the corpus of Lehmann and Holum, these are represented by between nine and twelve inscriptions, a modest number.⁶⁵ The majority of the Latin inscriptions reflect the presence in the city of the governor, of the financial procurator, and of men belonging to the provincial garrison. Others are public inscriptions that are in Latin because of the colonial status of the city. Some citizens of Caesarea will have joined the provincial army and returned there after discharge and prominent citizens may have reached important positions in the imperial hierarchy.⁶⁶ There may

⁶⁵ Lehmann and Holum 2000: nos. 37 and 365 are fragmentary but may belong to this category. No. 44 perhaps records a private contribution for a building. No. 122 provides evidence of the existence of Augustales at Caesarea. There are eight Latin grave inscriptions: nos. 160–4 (fragmentary) and the following that may not be relevant, strictly speaking, because they represent serving military men: 145: a *primus pilus*; 146: a commander of the VI Ferrata, set up by a centurion, by his procurator and his freedmen and heirs; 148: a centurion's wife. These three may, but need not represent local people who served in the army or foreigners buried in Caesarea. There was presumably a second- to third-century cemetery not represented in this corpus and quite probably it contained a larger proportion of Latin epitaphs. There are some other fragments that cannot be interpreted with certainty. Obviously, this does not take into account inscriptions that have been discovered, but are unpublished.

⁶⁶ Lehmann and Holum 2000 suggest this for dedicators and dedicatees who have Quirina for their tribe (nos. 15 and 18) and Werner Eck plausibly argues for such roots in the case of nos. 4 and 10. See Eck 1996: esp. 129–32; Lehmann and Holum 2000: 39, 46.

be more cases of people with military functions, described as such on inscriptions, whose local connections are not recognisably defined in the texts, and it is to be presumed that such people sometimes chose Latin for their inscriptions. Undoubtedly, the number of inscriptions in Latin is a remarkable feature of the epigraphy of Caesarea, but this same pattern may be recognised, as will be seen below, in Bostra and Gerasa in neighbouring Arabia, neither of which were veteran colonies. Of course, I do not pretend to offer here a definitive analysis, which must, in any case, await the publication of the complete corpus of inscriptions. My point is that the inscriptions known so far do not provide evidence to contradict the conclusion, based on other indications, that Vespasian gave Caesarea the rank of a colony as a reward for good behaviour without imposing a group of veteran settlers on the city.

AEILIA CAPITOLINA⁶⁷

The re-foundation of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina represented the last establishment of a genuine veteran colony in the region, as opposed to the grant of colonial status to an existing community.⁶⁸ It was an exceptional foundation, first, because it replaced the city of Jerusalem and, second, in Roman terms, because it was situated side by side with a functioning legionary base. As in the case of Caesarea, but for different reasons, this means that it is not easy to interpret the epigraphic evidence, since it must be determined whether Latin inscriptions derive from the legionary base or from the colony. Unlike Caesarea, however, Jerusalem has produced very few Latin texts for the period under consideration.⁶⁹ So far, there are four military inscriptions, clearly connected with the presence of a military unit.⁷⁰ There are at least four public inscriptions set up by the colony.⁷¹ There are, however, also a few Latin epitaphs, some of them of military men⁷² and others of civilians who may well have been citizens of the Roman colony.⁷³

⁶⁷ I assume that Latin inscriptions dated between 70 CE and Hadrian are connected with the establishment of the legio X Fretensis and are therefore not to be discussed here.

⁶⁸ Isaac 1980–81: esp. 101–6 = *Near East*: 99–107; Millar 1990: 28–30.

⁶⁹ Thomsen 1922; Thomsen 1941. Full publication of the inscriptions from Jerusalem and vicinity is in preparation as a fascicle of the *Corpus inscriptionum Iudaeae-Palaestinae*. For a related topic, see now Arnould 1997.

⁷⁰ Thomsen 1922: nos. 1 (*ILS* 4392); 3b; 5 (*CIL* III 6641, 12080a); and 6 (*CIL* III 6638).

⁷¹ Thomsen 1922: no. 4 (*CIL* III 6639); *AE* 1999: 1691. Perhaps also Thomsen 1922: nos. 2 (*CIL* III 6640, 12080) and 3a. Cotton and Eck 1997: 11–20.

⁷² Thomsen 1922: no. 92 and the fragmentary nos. 89, 90; probably also 91a and b (*CIL* III 12081b); 178 (*CIL* III 14155.3); 180 (Iliffe 1933: no. 4); *AE* 1939: 157.

⁷³ Thomsen 1922: nos. 179; 182 (*CIL* III 14155.4); 183 (*CIL* III 6643, 12080b). These are all three

This completes our little survey of evidence from the Roman colonies in the region. For comparison, it will now be useful briefly to discuss the Latin inscriptions from several towns in the Near East that were not veteran colonies.

PALMYRA

A recent inventory of the Latin inscriptions of Palmyra⁷⁴ divides them into two main groups:

1. Six trilingual grave inscriptions (Latin, Greek and Palmyrene), most of which concern people occupying prominent positions in the city, dated to the first and second centuries (from 52 to 176 CE). The Latin is always brief, the Greek longer and the Palmyrene longest. The presence of Latin here is no indication that the language was spoken locally, but must be seen as a gesture or a declaration of loyalty towards the Roman Empire. Interestingly, Latin is not used locally after Palmyra received colonial rank, probably under Severus.⁷⁵
2. Military inscriptions which are divided into three sub-groups: inscriptions linked with the imperial family, inscriptions concerning officers, and funerary inscriptions. These reflect the presence of a military garrison at Palmyra.

BOSTRA

The town of Bostra in Arabia served as a legionary base and seat of the provincial governor.⁷⁶ It received colonial status in the third century, a grant that had no impact on the social composition of the city. The inscriptions have been published very well in one accessible volume. Numerous inscriptions were set up by serving military men,⁷⁷ by governors,⁷⁸ or members of the governor's entourage.⁷⁹ These need not detain us here.⁸⁰

women. Sukenik and Mayer 1930: 45–6, fig. 38; Thomsen 1941: no. 182a: the epitaph of a civilian from Zeugma, his wife and son.

⁷⁴ As'ad and Delplace 2002: 363–400.

⁷⁵ Millar *Roman Near East*: 326–7.

⁷⁶ For the inscriptions from Bostra: *IGLS XIII 1*, ed. M. Sartre. For the city, see Sartre 1985. For the coinage see Spijkerman 1978 and Kindler 1983.

⁷⁷ *IGLS XIII 1*, e.g. nos. 9050; 9051; 9064; 9065(?); 9067; 9069; 9070; 9072; 9078; 9079; 9081; 9082; 9085; 9086; 9087; 9098; note also 9169.

⁷⁸ *IGLS XIII 1*, nos. 9060; 9062. ⁷⁹ *IGLS XIII 1*, nos. 9071; 9077.

⁸⁰ Note also the more recently published inscriptions: *AE* 2000: 1527a–b: emperors; 1528: military; 1529–32; 1536: governors; 1540: military building inscriptions.

Generally speaking, there is a separation between city and army in the sense that there are no careers of men who served both as officers in the army and as city magistrates, such as we have encountered in Heliopolis,⁸¹ and Berytus,⁸² but not, so far, at Caesarea. The city made dedications in Latin to such officials but private inscriptions in Latin are rarer.⁸³ Nevertheless, we have some epitaphs set up by civilians for their military relatives or by military for civilians.⁸⁴ Of particular interest are inscriptions by civilians for civilians in Latin.⁸⁵ These presumably represent the relatives of military people who settled in Bostra. These cases provide evidence of some local use of Latin even though there is no question that there ever was a veteran settlement. The Latin must be ascribed to families somehow related to the provincial government or the army who preferred to use this language for public consumption.

GERASA

This city was apparently the seat of the provincial procurator of Roman Arabia,⁸⁶ and there was a local garrison. It received colonial status in the third century. We rule out of our discussion Latin inscriptions set up by people or military units temporarily present in the city, such as the *equites singulares* of Hadrian who made a dedication when the emperor was in the region (Kraeling 1938: no. 30), anonymous dedications to emperors, or inscriptions set up in the city by high provincial officials, legates and procurators (105, 160), their subordinates, notably the procurator's staff (165, 208) and their relatives (207), and serving soldiers and officers (171, 178).

Of the remaining, the most remarkable is no. 175, a Latin inscription in honour of Maecius Laetus, procurator, set up by the heirs of Allius Vestinus, *advocatus fisci, ex testamento eius*. This strongly suggests that the

⁸¹ *IGLS* VI 2786–7, 2793–4, 2796. ⁸² *CIL* III 6687 = *ILS* 2683, discussed above.

⁸³ *IGLS* XIII 1, no. 9029. One inscription in honour of Iulia Domna represents a dedication by an individual who came from Parthicopolis in Thrace (9053). He may have been the relative of a soldier or government official. Iulia Domna, born in Emesa, appears frequently on inscriptions in the region: on milestones (*CIL* III 13689), on honorary inscriptions in the Galilee (*JGR* III 1106) and in Berytus (*AE* 1950: 0230).

⁸⁴ *IGLS* XIII 1, 9170: by a freedman and heir named Ianuarinius Florinus for a centurion. 9172: Mercurius, freedman of a *beneficiarius tribuni*. See also 9179 (pp. 234–5): the mother and sister of an *optio hastati* of the VI Ferr. from Philadelphia; 9181: a centurion for his adopted son.

⁸⁵ *IGLS* XIII 1, 9171: Antonius Eutices for his spouse; 9177 (p. 232); 9184 (p. 240); 9189 (p. 245); 9190 (p. 246); 9195: the father was perhaps a former soldier, the son, nine years old, an *eques* (p. 250); 9197 (p. 251).

⁸⁶ Haensch 1997.

heirs were local people. The funerary inscriptions of serving soldiers are in Latin, as expected, and mark the presence of a garrison in town, but give no indication of Latinity among the permanent population (200, 201, 211), nor does the tombstone of a procurator set up by his widow and son (207). Some, however, may possibly indicate that there was at least *some* local Latin culture. For instance, no. 199, the epitaph of an *optio* of the ala I Thracum, perhaps locally based, was set up in both languages by his brother, who is not listed as a soldier himself. Other epitaphs, in Latin only, were set up for imperial freedmen who fulfilled various functions in the procurator's office by their spouses, children and relatives (202; 203; 204; 210; also: 215; 216). The procurator's staff would seem to have formed a milieu in the city which preferred at least to have their tombs marked in Latin, but little can be said about the origins of those staff members.⁸⁷

Furthermore, there are a number of interesting but ambivalent cases. No. 177 is engraved upon a cylindrical stele, in honour of Marcus Aurelius Faustus, an imperial freedman, and lists various equestrian functions, all in Latin. One might suggest that the dedicants were citizens of Gerasa who wrote Latin because of their social basis in the army. No. 179 refers to Gerasa as a Roman colony and is thus of the third century. The dedicants, an 'Aurelius Longinianus . . . and his son', may have written Latin because of a military career, but this cannot be simply assumed.

The least that can be said for Gerasa is that there are sufficient inscriptions in Latin to demonstrate that there was a habit of using that language in formal texts. Mostly, these texts can be connected to people and their relatives who were associated with the army and provincial government. Yet many of the inscriptions are epitaphs and therefore should be regarded as belonging to the personal sphere, independent of a formal or administrative framework where the use of Latin was obligatory.

PETRA⁸⁸

Whatever the status of the old Nabataean capital after the annexation of the Province of Arabia, it is certain that the governors regularly visited it.⁸⁹ It received colonial status under Elagabalus, probably in 221–2.⁹⁰ The

⁸⁷ No. 204 gives the origin of one *tabularius*, an imperial freedman, as Puteoli. His mother and sister have Greek names.

⁸⁸ Sartre 1993b. ⁸⁹ Bowersock *Arabia*: 86; Sartre 1985, 68–70; *IGLS XXI*, pp. 11, 30.

⁹⁰ Ben-Dor 1948: 41–3; Millar 1990: 51.

Latin inscriptions reflect the presence of the governor and of military personnel.⁹¹

CAESAREA PHILIPPI

The excavations at the Pan sanctuary of Caesarea Philippi (Banias) have uncovered a substantial number of inscriptions (twenty-nine texts).⁹² There is an obvious preponderance of Roman personal names (fifteen Roman, five Greek, five Semitic). A special case is inscription no. 5 of 222 CE, which mentions eight members of a family, five of them with names that are connected with 'Agrippa'. This presumably reflects a local tradition of more than a century of loyalty to the Herodian house. There are few regular Greek names, and only four Semitic ones, including two patronymics. Seven inscriptions are in Latin, not including boundary markers and milestones. This is remarkable for material from an essentially rural sanctuary in this region, demanding a particular explanation. There is no information about any settlement of Roman veterans in the locale and there is no reason to assume that there was one. It is very likely that the first- and second-century inscriptions in Latin should be assigned to men from the region who also served in the Roman army and had undergone a measure of Latinisation.⁹³ It is quite likely that these were men serving in the units of Ituraeans, recruited in part from the territory of Caesarea Philippi.⁹⁴

ARADOS

This was the most important northern Phoenician city, located on an island off the coast. A few Latin inscriptions have been found here.⁹⁵ The city and council dedicated a statue to an equestrian officer, who may have

⁹¹ *IGLS* XXI 1–8: dedications by the governor Q. Aiadius Modestus, 205–7 CE; nos. 40–1: to Diocletian (fragment); 44: soldiers of a legionary cohort, unnamed emperor; 45: for Claudius Severus, governor, 107–15 CE; 47: in honour of a governor, *opt(iones) l(egio)nis*; 51: tomb of T. Annius Sextius Florentinus, governor, 127 CE; 52: C. Antonius Valens, *eques* of the legio III Cyr., epitaph; 53: fragmentary epitaph.

⁹² The excavations were carried out by Dr Zvi Maoz, formerly of the Antiquities Authority, and I have prepared the inscriptions for publication in the periodical *Atiqot*. I mention them here to provide preliminary information and hope that the full publication will appear in print before long, after a quite considerable delay.

⁹³ Two inscriptions are directly related to the military, but do not prove this hypothesis. A Greek inscription mentions 'Taia the son of Silas, *signifer*.' Another is set up by a centurion in honour of a commander of the cohorts *Milliaria Thracum* in the reign of Trajan, which shows that this unit must have been in the region in this period.

⁹⁴ Mann 1983.

⁹⁵ Rey-Coquais 1974. For Dio Chrysostom's disparaging remarks about the city, see below.

been either commander of a local garrison or a native Aradian serving in the army.⁹⁶ The latter situation is almost certainly the case attested in the bilingual inscription of L. Septimius Marcellus for his brother M. Septimius Magnus, centurion in various legions.⁹⁷ There is some further evidence of men from Arados serving in the army.⁹⁸

MILITARY PRESENCE

To end this limited survey, it may be useful to note that a number of cities have produced Latin texts that are limited strictly to the military sphere and reflect the presence of a military garrison at some stage. The most remarkable case is that of Apamea in Syria.⁹⁹ Other towns to be mentioned are Neapolis (Nablus),¹⁰⁰ Samaria-Sebaste,¹⁰¹ Emmaus-Nicopolis,¹⁰² Tiberias,¹⁰³ and, finally, Dura Europos.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ *IGLS* VII 4009 (= *CIL* III 14165/10): *Civitas et Bule Aradia / L Domitio C. f. Fab Catullo [p]raef*. . . There is no explicit evidence of a garrison in the city, but note coins of the city countermarked 'L XV': Hill 1917: xxxvii.

⁹⁷ *IGLS* VII 4016. Compare 4015: The boule and demos set up a statue with dedication in Greek for M. Septimius Magnus.

⁹⁸ *IGLS* VII, p. 90, no. 40; *CIL* VIII 18084, line 1: *-ius Severus Arado*; 24: *[Cl]emens Gabal(a)*. Note, finally, *IGLS* VII 4028 from Hosn Soleiman in the Alawite mountains, the great sanctuary of Arados at Baetocece. It is bilingual and records five documents affirming the privileges bestowed upon the sanctuary by various Seleucid rulers and reconfirmed in an imperial rescript of the mid-third century (Gallienus *et al.* 253–60 CE).

⁹⁹ Balty and van Rengen 1993; cf. *AE* 1993: 1571–97.

¹⁰⁰ (a) A fragmentary inscription mentions a *tribunus* and a *primus pilus* or *praepositus*: Clermont-Ganneau 1896: 318f. (b) Countermarks of the legio XII Fulminata on coins struck up to 86/7 CE: Howgego 1983. The coins were countermarked after 86/7 CE and probably before 156/7. This almost certainly shows that the legion (or part of it) was based at Neapolis in 115–17 or 132–5. (c) The tombstone of M. Ulpius Magnus, centurion of the legio V Macedonica, presumably from the years of the revolt of Bar Kokhba: Abel 1926: figs. 1 and 2. (d) A city coin: *obv.* Tribonianus Gallus (251–3); *rev.* *COL NE[A]POLI* and emblems of the legio X Fretensis: Ben-Dor 1952: pl. 9.1. (e) City coin: *obv.* Volusianus Augustus (251–3); *rev.* *COL NEAPOLIS* and emblems of the legio III Cyrenaica: Kindler 1980.

¹⁰¹ Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: 251, no. 1, recording a *vexillatio* of the legio VI Ferrata. *AE* 1938: 13: *mil(ites) v(e)xi(lationis) coh(ortium) Pa(nnoniae) Sup(erioris), cives Sisci(ani) (et) Varcian(i) et Latobici*. *AE* 1948: 150; 151.

¹⁰² Josephus says that the legio V Macedonica stayed there in the Jewish war before the siege of Jerusalem: *Jos. BJ* 4.8.1 (445); see also: 5.1.6 (42); 2.3 (67). Five inscriptions referring to this legion have been found there: *CIL* III 6647; 14155.11; 14155.12; Landau 1976. At least two of these are epitaphs of serving soldiers who died at Emmaus some time in the later first century CE: cf. Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996: 14–15, 152, 174. This shows that they stayed there long enough for a stonemason's workshop to be set up. Another inscription mentions the coh(ors) VI Ulpi(a) Petr(aeorum): *AE* 1924: 132. A fragmentary inscription mentions an unknown cohort: *CIL* III 13588. It is therefore quite possible, although not certain, that army units were permanently based here.

¹⁰³ *AE* 1948: 146: the epitaph of a centurion of the legio VI Ferrata. Cf. *AE* 1988: 1053: a stamped brick of the same legion, found on Har Hazon, north-west of Tiberias.

¹⁰⁴ Millar *Roman Near East*: 467–71; Pollard *Soldiers*.

CONCLUSIONS

All empires are necessarily multilingual. The Roman Empire in the east had two languages of government of unequal status, Latin and Greek. Greek could be used for some official functions in the Roman army, but, as formulated by Adams, Latin 'had super-high status which made it suitable for various symbolic purposes, whether in legalistic documents, or to highlight the Roman identity of a soldier, or to mark or acknowledge overriding authority'.¹⁰⁵

The question asked in this paper is what we can deduce from the surviving texts, invariably inscriptions on stone, about the use of Latin in cities of the Roman east. Such use of Latin may, but need not have been a very deliberate expression of some form of identity (political, cultural or ideological) rather than reflecting intensive and 'everyday' use and knowledge of Latin among the authors of the texts. We have no way of knowing whether Latin was a first, second, or third language for most of the individuals involved in the Latin dedications, but whether Latin was imposed or preferred by these users, it represents an ideological expression. The Latinity of those who used Latin on epitaphs may have been superficial, but its use implies a declaration of social and political loyalty. Latin was a minority language in the epigraphic culture of the east, and certainly in the oral culture of the cities. Its use, therefore, is necessarily a conscious attempt to differentiate its users from the surrounding Greek or Semitic populations. We can compare this to the use of Hebrew in funerary inscriptions. Traditionally, the tombstones of Jews in the diaspora are in Hebrew or in both Hebrew and the local language. This does not mean that the deceased or their relatives have any serious knowledge of Hebrew. Another example of the investment of significance in language choice is a famous graffito, scratched in the rocks of the Wadi Mukatteb in Sinai: *Cessent Syri ante Latinos Romanos* ('The Syrians will cease before (? yield to) the Latin Romans'). The words of the traveller are not exactly Ciceronian Latin, but his meaning is more or less clear.¹⁰⁶

Inscriptions represent, first of all, a public declaration of political and social identity. Nevertheless, a switch of language clearly did not have the same meaning in every context. The significance ascribed to the choice of language probably depended on the particular epigraphic culture of

¹⁰⁵ Adams *Bilingualism*: ch. 5.4: 'Latin as a language of power.' Certain types of legalistic documents concerning Roman citizens had to be in Latin, even if the citizens did not know Latin. Birth certificates and wills of Roman citizens had to be in Latin and so were building inscriptions.

¹⁰⁶ *CIL* III 86.

the city. These cultures appear not to have been straightforwardly related to accepted or plausible claims of Greek origin. Thus, Dio Chrysostom in his thirty-third discourse, where he harangues the citizens of Tarsus: 'And would any one call you colonists from Argos, as you claim to be, or more likely colonists rather of those abominable Aradians? Would he call you Greeks, or the most licentious of Phoenicians?'¹⁰⁷ Yet the self-perception of the citizens may have been very different. Dio himself was well aware that the Hellenic credentials of Tarsus were more impressive than those of his native Prusa. We do not know what the citizens of Tarsus thought of Dio's harangue, but we can be quite certain that the Hellenised inhabitants of Aradus would not have been pleased if they had heard him speaking. An inscription from Trachonitis is dedicated by 'The Hellenes in Danaba'.¹⁰⁸ Even the Hellenised Syrian and Palestinian cities might claim to be genuinely Hellenic, as shown by an inscription from Scythopolis-Beth Shean, which refers to the city of Nysa-Scythopolis as 'one of the Hellenic cities in Coele-Syria'.¹⁰⁹ The continued Latin tradition in Roman colonies such as Berytus and Aelia Capitolina may be due in part to active involvement on the part of the inhabitants of the eastern colonies in the Roman army. In Greek-speaking Roman colonies in the west, epitaphs of the early imperial period are found written in Greek, but influenced by Latin formulae, probably reflecting the particular cultural status of the two languages in those cities.¹¹⁰

The least problematic cases we have surveyed are those of Berytus and Heliopolis, known to have been populated by veteran settlers. Heliopolis in particular has produced a good quantity of inscriptions which show that private citizens used Latin on their public monuments, as did distinguished citizens who served in senior imperial positions and as city magistrates. These types of inscriptions show that Latin was to some extent integrated into civilian life. There is some evidence that the same was the case in Aelia Capitolina where veterans certainly took root in a depopulated city. There is no such published evidence from Caesarea, which, I have argued, was a titular colony. Bostra, legionary base and seat of the governor of Arabia, has also provided copious epigraphic evidence. Significantly, there is no evidence of senior military men or imperial magistrates

¹⁰⁷ Dio Chrys. or. 33.41; cf. 42 and on this Isaac 2004: 345–6, 395. For Latin in Arados, see above.

¹⁰⁸ Sartre 1993a; *AE* 1993: 1636 from Dhunaybeh (Danaba): οἱ ἐν Δαναβοῖς Ἕλληνες Μηνοφίλῳ εὐνοίας ἔνεκεν. It is suggested that this might be connected with the Herodian settlers in Trachonitis.

¹⁰⁹ Foerster and Tsafirir 1986–7: τῶν κατὰ Κοίλην Συρίαν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων. See the comments by Gatier 1990: 205–6 and Stein 1991.

¹¹⁰ Korhonen 2002: 73.

serving also as city magistrates, an indication of social separation. It is not surprising that we encounter epitaphs set up by civilians for their military relatives or by military for civilians in Bostra. Noteworthy, however, are a limited number of inscriptions by civilians for civilians which presumably represent the relatives of military people who settled in Bostra and, as such, are evidence of some local use of Latin even though there is no question that there ever was a planned veteran settlement at Bostra. A similar pattern is found at Gerasa, where the financial procurator had his headquarters and various units appear to have been based. Finally, we must note rare and surprising pockets of Latin culture attested in minor provincial centres such as Caesarea Philippi.

The use of Latin on inscriptions in a few, but not many, cities of the Roman east represents a variety of social situations, which, given the scarcity of sources, are not always easy to determine. It may not tell us much about the language actually spoken in daily life. It is, however, a clear indication of a direct Roman impact on the life of a city: settlement of Roman army veterans is but one such phenomenon, the presence of a garrison or provincial offices is another constituting factor, but there are more possibilities such as the settlement of retired soldiers and officers from a local or regional garrison. These might be either retired locals who had served in the army or immigrants who had served and then retired locally. Although the use of Latin on, for instance, epitaphs does not necessarily mean that Latin was the first language spoken by the dead or the dedicants, the choice of Latin was a significant decision. It broke with the linguistic practices of the surrounding communities and thus set apart those who used the language. The association with the Roman rulers means that the most obvious understanding of the choice of language is as a reflection of political loyalty and of association with the imperial power. Latin does not simply represent one of the languages spoken locally, but it had a particular social and political resonance, and the study of the epigraphic material opens up these resonances to historical analysis.

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II

*Social and legal institutions as reflected
in the documentary evidence*

Euergetism in Josephus and the epigraphic culture of first-century Jerusalem

Seth Schwartz

The epigraphical remains of Jerusalem from the period between the reign of Herod and the Destruction (37 BCE–70 CE) are unlike those of most other cities of comparable size (however precisely we calculate this) and importance in the eastern Roman Empire.¹ In brief, the overwhelming majority of public, or quasi-public, writings consists of graffiti scratched on limestone ossuaries.² These inscriptions, of which there are several hundred, normally record only the name of the deceased, usually either in Aramaic letters or in Greek (a handful are in Palmyrene), without so much as a *hic iacet*, though there are exceptions.³ Inscriptions of similar type have been found in burial caves and monumental *nefashot*, or

¹ It is generally agreed that under Herod the city covered about 90 hectares – a little under twice the size of the average city of High Imperial Roman Gaul – see below. Subsequently an additional tract of land was incorporated into the city, through the construction of a ‘third wall’. But the location of this wall is controversial – either it roughly followed the course of the current northern wall of the Old City, or it passed through the modern Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood several hundred metres to the north. If it followed the northern route, the city’s area was nearly doubled. But the land newly annexed to the city, in this view, is generally regarded as having been sparsely populated. See Geva 1993: 744–6; Levine 2002: 313–8.

Population size has been much more controversial: one should resist the temptation of averaging out the extreme estimates, which seems to be more or less Levine’s method (340–3), yielding a figure of perhaps 70,000–100,000. Price’s *aporia* (Price 1992: 208–9) is strictly speaking correct, given the uncertainties involved in estimating average population densities of built-up areas – the only truly respectable technique for calculating population sizes of ruined cities – but there is still some utility in such estimates, if carefully done, because they may at least provide figures likely to be correct within an order of magnitude. Provision of broadly parametric figures is the best to be hoped for, in any case, and is also extremely useful (it is important to know that figures like 300,000 or 10,000 are practically impossible for the population size of Jerusalem in 66 CE). The best such accounts are by Broshi 1975: 5–14, and more recently, Broshi 1996: 9–34, especially p. 15, who suggests a figure of 60,000. Woolf’s discussion of the population density of Gallic cities (he proposes a maximum of 150 per hectare) suggests a figure closer to 30,000 for pre-revolt Jerusalem, though Broshi’s reasons for positing a population density of over 300 per hectare are at least not completely unconvincing; see Woolf 1998: 137–8.

² For bibliography, see Fritz and Deines 1999: 222–41, especially pp. 237–9, updating Rahmani *Ossuaries*.

³ For summaries, see Misgav 1999: 19–20; Rahmani *Ossuaries*: 11–19.

mausolea, scattered around the outskirts of the city. Even here, though, writing is much less common than in the earlier burial caves of Marisa/Tell Sandahanna, or the later ones of Bet Shearim.⁴ As examples of what *is* there, there is an enigmatic, and very roughly carved, graffito from the 'Tomb of the Kings', and a longer graffito, interestingly in Hebrew, listing the names of the members of the priestly clan of Hezir buried in their famous mausoleum in the Kidron Valley (*CIJ* 1388, 1394).⁵

Several non-funerary inscriptions have turned up, too, for example in the Jewish Quarter excavations – but these are similar in character to the funerary inscriptions, very brief, often graffiti, often apparently simply marking possession of an item. Aside from the Benei Hezir inscription just mentioned, and the very enigmatic Aramaic inscription from Givat ha-Mivtar, north of ancient Jerusalem,⁶ the few relatively long texts from Jerusalem are all in Greek: the epitaph of Nicanor (*CIJ* 1400); the warning inscription from the Temple, explicitly addressed to gentiles; the dedicatory inscription of the synagogue of Theodotus (*CIJ* 1404) – a synagogue explicitly built in part to serve the needs of pilgrims from the Mediterranean diaspora.⁷

In sum, one might fairly characterise the epigraphical culture of first-century Jerusalem as largely informal and consisting overwhelmingly of personal names and little else. The exceptions to this generalisation usually reflect, in a fairly transparent way, the epigraphical practices of places other than Jewish Palestine.

Now an argument can be made, and has in fact been made by Rudolf Haensch,⁸ that Jerusalem's epigraphical culture was actually much more normal than the surviving evidence indicates, for the evidence has been skewed by the repeated destruction and rebuilding of the city. There must have been the sort of dedicatory and building inscriptions found

⁴ Cf. Misgav 1999: 19–20, emphasising that the overwhelming majority of ossuaries, and graves, of the Second Temple period, are anepigraphic.

⁵ On the Tomb of the Kings, see Kon 1947; on the Kidron Valley monuments, see now Barag 2003. According to Barag, the monument of the Benei Hezir was built in the later second century BCE and remained in use until 70 CE.

⁶ See Naveh 1973; Rosenthal 1973; and note also the Aramaic inscription marking the alleged burial place of Uzziah, king of Judah: Sukenik 1931, with the additional comments of Ben-Eliahu 2000, curiously unaware of Schremer 1987. And note also the brief, fragmentary Hebrew text discovered by Mazar near the Temple Mount, apparently a kind of street sign directing the (priestly?) pedestrian to the 'Bet Ha-Teqi'ah', whatever that may be: Mazar 1970.

⁷ The standard dating to the first century is compellingly defended by Kloppenborg-Verbin 2000: 243–80; he also provides a bibliography of inscriptions from ancient Jerusalem not carved on ossuaries.

⁸ Haensch 2001.

in large quantities in every city of the Roman east, even small ones; the appearance of the public spaces of Jerusalem was, in this view, not as transgressive as a superficial survey of the epigraphical remains would lead one to conclude. There is undoubtedly some truth to this argument. According to Josephus (*AJ* 15.267–79) Herod's theatre at Jerusalem was decorated with many *epigraphai*, presumably inscriptions, glorifying Augustus. I will return later to the fact that Josephus here denounces the whole complex of cultural practices embodied in the amphitheatre as alien to Jewish *ethē*.

Perhaps somewhat more significant is an inscription published in the 1980s by Benjamin Isaac.⁹ This fragmentary Greek text, inscribed on a small limestone plaque, seems to commemorate a donation made, possibly in the reign of Herod, by someone called something like Paris son of Akeson, a resident of Rhodes, perhaps to fund a segment of pavement, possibly in or near the Temple precinct. There are, to be sure, many uncertainties about this text, as I have hinted, but the small size of the plaque, and the probably modest size of the donation (counted in drachmae, not talents – though this does not prove much), make Isaac's suggestion that there were many other texts like this around the Temple Mount very plausible.

Such brief commemorations of donations are not typical Greco-Roman building inscriptions. Isaac's text, if his interpretation of it is correct, is most closely analogous to inscriptions, mainly from a later period, commemorating the donation of a certain number of 'feet' of a synagogue or church *prodromos* or nave mosaic.¹⁰ These are not so much building or dedicatory inscriptions as commemorations of individual pious acts, conceptually similar to votive inscriptions (some of which were almost certainly to be found in the Jerusalem Temple too), of the sort discussed in suggestive detail by Mary Beard.¹¹ In some contexts such inscriptions may have had a kind of euergetistic function, as they certainly did centuries later in churches and synagogues.¹² But the supposition of such a function in this case is very much complicated by the foreignness of the donor and the 'international' character of the central public spaces of Herodian Jerusalem. An inscription like that of Paris son of Akeson can be construed as euergetistic in only the most symbolic of ways – as commemorating a benefaction not to the citizens of Jerusalem

⁹ Isaac 1983.

¹⁰ E.g., *IGLS* IV 1319–37, with comments of Mouterde and Jalabert ad loc.

¹¹ Beard 1991.

¹² See Schwartz 2001: 280–9.

(such a concept seems not even to have existed),¹³ but to the scattered, linguistically and culturally diverse *ethnos* of the Jews.

Let me at this point step back and introduce some brief methodological discussion as a way of summing up what I have written so far, and of anticipating the direction of the rest of this paper.

1. The epigraphical remains of pre-70 Jerusalem are unlike those of most other medium-sized cities of the early imperial Roman east: surviving texts are overwhelmingly very brief graffiti. We have little monumental epigraphy and few building or honorary inscriptions.

2. One way of explaining this anomaly is by arguing, *against* the evidence, for Jerusalem's fundamental cultural normalcy, or at least its partial normalcy. Partial because even normalisers can scarcely overlook the fact that in important ways first-century Jerusalem was *not* a normal eastern Roman city: it was not just a pilgrimage centre – a distinction it shared with several other Mediterranean cities – but also the metropolis of a nation,¹⁴ a nation (for even the obvious bears emphasising) united, if only symbolically, by professed adherence to a separatist, exclusivistic religious ideology. But it is equally impossible to deny that Jerusalem was, despite this, in other ways a fairly typical eastern Roman city. After all, the city and the *ethnos* as a whole required the support of its rulers and also friendly relations with its political, social and cultural environment – without these, it could hardly survive. So, Greek was widely used; emperors, generals and other grandees were warmly flattered and supported; and the public architecture and private lifestyles of the elites bore a more than passing resemblance to those of their counterparts elsewhere in the region.¹⁵ Hence we can never know *a priori* whether or not to expect to encounter items from the standard repertoire of Greco-Roman culture among the Jews. The challenge for the historian is to pin down in as precise a way as

¹³ Notwithstanding Josephus' allegation that the emperor Claudius addressed a letter to the Jerusalem *demos*, an entity Josephus himself frequently mentions in the *Jewish War*, and the designation of a resident of Hellenistic Iasos, in Ionia, as *Hierosolymites*, which should normally imply citizenship (*CJ* II 749): the Jerusalem *demos* is unlikely to have existed in any technical sense, and the case of Niketas son of Jason the Jerusalemite is certainly complicated by the fact that he appears on a list of contributors to the local Dionysia (see discussion in Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: III 1, 25). The fundamental account remains that of Tcherikover 1964 (especially 66–7, on the Jerusalem *demos*).

¹⁴ As emphasised by Tcherikover 1964; see also Stern 1980.

¹⁵ Use of Greek (the vagueness of this formulation is intentional, and greater – and correspondingly more misleading – specificity is unnecessary for my purposes): see the material gathered by Rahmani *Ossuaries*; discussions of the issue in Sevenster 1968; less satisfactorily, Barr 1989; Schwartz 1995; van der Horst 2001. On foreign grandees, see Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: II 309–13; Schwartz 1992. The architecture of Jerusalem is surveyed by Levine 2002: 313–50; on material culture, see Geva 1993: 717–57; Geva 2003.

possible the details of Jerusalem's civic compromise, to borrow Richard Gordon's phrase: how far did it buy into the system, what did it reject, and what accept but only with adaptations?¹⁶

3. Therefore, I would like to suggest that instead of arguing against the evidence, we try to see if we have any grounds for arguing for it. In other words, I propose that we exploit an evidentiary anomaly to investigate the historical problems it raises.

4. Here is how I would formulate the problem: the types of epigraphy absent from the Jerusalemite record are those associated with the complex of social and cultural practices that historians since Veyne have called euergetism (i.e. private benefaction for public benefit, with the public repaying the benefactor with tokens of honour).¹⁷ It has been compellingly argued that euergetism was a fundamental and widespread feature of urban life in the Roman Empire. What then was the status of euergetism in Jerusalem, and why? I will try to begin to answer this question by examining several of Josephus' surprisingly explicit discussions of the subject.

JOSEPHUS ON EUERGETISM

Let me start with some general observations. Much of the material relevant to the topic comes, unsurprisingly, from Josephus' discussions of the Herodian family, with another important episode in the story of the royal family of Adiabene. The *Jewish War* pays little attention to these episodes: the story of Queen Helena and her sons is omitted altogether; as far as Herod is concerned, in the *War* Josephus very briefly lists the king's construction projects before moving on to his central topic, Herod's domestic/succession crises.¹⁸ The *Jewish War* presents Herodian euergetism in a matter-of-fact way, as a completely naturalised, and not especially important, feature of the public life not only of places like Caesarea, but also of Jerusalem (*BJ* 1.401–28). Indeed, Josephus barely characterises Herod's benefactions as euergetism at all. Rather, they were deeds of *eusebeia* (piety – 1.400 – perhaps applied to his gifts in general, not just the Jerusalem temple); attempts to perpetuate 'the memory and the names' of his *philoi* (1.403); to offer honour to Caesar (1.407); to provide memorials to his relatives (1.417), and to himself (1.419). Only

¹⁶ Gordon 1990. ¹⁷ Veyne 1990.

¹⁸ On Herod's building projects – the most prominent but not the only component of his benefactions – see Otto 1913: 77–85; Schalit 1969: 328–403; Richardson 1996: 174–215.

in the case of Herod's gifts to foreign cities does the *Jewish War* utilise the language of euergetism, characterising them as *megalopsychia* (1.422), *charis* (1.426) and *euergesia* (1.428) – i.e. as benefiting Herod's clients, not his patrons (including God).

Now it is possible that Josephus' avoidance of the language of euergetism for Herod's domestic benefactions reflects the Jews' resistance to Herod and/or to the culture of euergetism itself. But not all Herod's domestic beneficiaries were Jews and his silence is perhaps more likely to reflect the *War's* view that Herod had no need to buy his subjects' loyalty and affection. In any case, Josephus certainly avoids any suggestion that the Jews or anyone else found Herod's generosity problematic – hence his silence about Herod's gift of a theatre, amphitheatre and appropriately murderous games and semi-idolatrous festivals to the people of Jerusalem.

By contrast, *Antiquities* and *Against Apion* present a surprisingly, though to be sure not absolutely, harmonious account of the Jews' attitude to those public honorific gestures which formed an essential part of the culture of euergetism.¹⁹ This fact makes it useful to begin with the (as it were) theoretical discussions of benefaction and its culture in *Antiquities*, Book 4 (the account of the Mosaic constitution) and *Against Apion*, Book 2 (the Jewish constitution), and to proceed with the accounts of actual benefactions in *Antiquities*, Books 15, 16, 19, 20.

THE JEWISH CONSTITUTION

Josephus provides the same basic characterisation of the Jewish *politeia* in *Antiquities* 4 and *Against Apion* 2, though in the former he calls it inappropriately an *aristokratia*, while in the latter he uses the neologism *theokratia*. One of the things Josephus means by both of these terms is that there is no place in the Israelite/Jewish constitution (unlike in actual aristocracies) for any extra-legal institution. Right after Moses calls the Israelite constitution an 'aristocracy' (*AJ* 4.223), he exhorts the Israelites to have only the laws as their *despotai* and to do all things in accordance with them; for (Moses continues) God is a sufficient *hegemon*.²⁰ Similarly, in *Against Apion* 2.157–63, though Moses is said to have brought about the

¹⁹ On the continuity of *Against Apion* with *Antiquities* on more or less precisely this point, see Rajak 2001; along similar lines, Castelli 2001.

²⁰ On *aristokratia*, see Schwartz 1983; in this passage it clearly does not mean what Schwartz claims it means in general – rule by council. On *theokratia*, see Cancik 1987 (exercising due scepticism about the argument that Josephus' conception was influenced by developments in Flavian politics); Spilsbury, 1996: 362–7.

Israelites' complete dependency on himself – a situation in which lesser men allow their polities to descend into *anomia* – he used this fact not for his own *pleonexia* (aggrandisement) or as an opportunity to impose tyranny, but rather in order to act piously and engage in good legislation (*eunomia*). In this way he displayed his virtue and made the best possible provision for the well-being of those who had made him their leader. A few paragraphs later (2.175–83), Josephus remarks that the Jews conduct every facet of their lives according to their laws, the result being utter stability: what could be better, he continues, than a constitution which makes God *hegemon* and places the priests in charge of day-to-day governance? For Moses appointed these men to *time*, 'not because of wealth or some other incidental advantages, but because they were distinguished by their obedience (*peitho*) and moderation (or good sense, *sophrosyne* – 2.186)'. Indeed, the *oikonomia* (conduct, management) of our *politeia* is (implicitly: nothing at all like the *oikonomiai* of the Greeks, but rather) like (what the Greeks would call) a *telete* – an initiation – or a *mysterion*. The states of heightened piety, purity and religious self-control Greeks struggle to maintain a few days a year, we sustain our entire lives (188).²¹

In sum, in these programmatic, idealising, and summary passages Josephus describes a constitution which may resemble that of a mystery cult or of other such organisations (I think Josephus is struggling to say here that it is a *religion*). But it is completely at odds with anything familiar from Greek political thought, except for a glancing similarity acknowledged by Josephus himself to the constitution of the Lacedaemonians. Certainly the Jewish *politeia* is essentially unlike any actual Greco-Roman city. Thus, to modernise the language of Josephus' observations, the Jewish constitution is totalising, while the constitutions of the Greeks are compartmental; the Jewish is divine in origin and nature, whereas Greeks acknowledge at least the partial humanity of theirs; the Jewish constitution grants executive power, not to rich men and other local grandees – like the Greeks in the wake of the collapse of democracy²² – but to a priesthood chosen for its obedience and piety (in *Against Apion*, though not in *War* or *Antiquities*, Josephus plays down the fact that the priests were a hereditary class).

²¹ A comment which mitigates the force of Rajak's observation (2001: 201) that one of the differences between *War* and *Antiquities/Against Apion* is that the latter characterises Judaism as a *politeia* whereas the former does not.

²² And note *Ap.* 2.217–9: Jews do not care for silver and gold, nor for wreaths of parsley and wild olive; rather the reward awaiting those who live *nomimos* is that they receive a better life in the revolution of the ages.

The main outlines of Josephus' views are thus beginning to emerge: his rejection of the social and cultural norms of the Greek and Greco-Roman city, especially in his later works, is strikingly explicit, but not absolute – hence the account mentioned earlier in which Moses, having made the Israelites his dependants (which could reflect Exodus 14:31), grants them good laws, both as recompense for their loyalty and to display his own virtue. This presentation is very remote indeed from the biblical account, and demonstrates that Josephus did not fully reject but rather adapted the culture of display and reciprocity which formed the core of Greco-Roman urban life.

This combination of rejection and appropriation is exemplified still more poignantly in Josephus' historical accounts; indeed, in *Antiquities*, unlike in the *War*, benefaction is such a prominent theme that it seems legitimate to wonder whether Josephus might not have seen one of his purposes in the later books of the *Antiquities* as memorialising benefactors to Jerusalem and/or to the nation of the Jews, or at least certain kinds of benefactors. Of course the greatest but also most problematic benefactor of all was King Herod, and it is to him that we now turn.

Josephus reports (*AJ* 15.267–79) that Herod built a theatre in and an amphitheatre near Jerusalem, and established games featuring athletic, musical and dramatic competitions, plus horse races.²³ Furthermore, the theatre was decorated with 'writings' about Augustus – probably inscriptions, as suggested earlier – and 'trophies of the nations he had conquered'. Then the king introduced *venationes*. While foreigners were impressed by their lavishness, the 'natives' (*epichorioi*) had a different reaction. In fact, Josephus seems to present several different Jewish responses to Herod's benefactions: in the first place (268), the very buildings themselves were 'alien to Jewish custom' (*ethos*) – for the use of the buildings and the shows or displays that went on in them *ou paradedotai* – were not part of the *paradosis*.²⁴ This is milder than the response to the *venationes*, described in 274 as a 'manifest abrogation of the customs honoured by them' (*phanera katalusis ton timomenon par' autois ethon*), 'for', Josephus continues, 'it is obviously impious to exchange the [Jewish] customs for foreign practices'; 'worst of all were the trophies' – because they seemed

²³ On the theatre see most recently Patrich 2002; Levine 2002: 201–6, discusses these buildings and Herod's games but contradicts Josephus by situating the events described in the amphitheatre rather than the theatre; see Schalit 1969: 370–1.

²⁴ Presumably, this refers to 'Jewish tradition' in general, not to the *paradosis* of the Pharisees (contrast Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: I 313) – entities that should be distinguished, notwithstanding the argument of Goodman 1999.

somehow related to idolatry – abhorrence of statues is a standard theme in Josephus’ discussions of this issue.²⁵ In any case, Josephus says that opposition to these developments led to an uprising among the Jews – easily crushed, but enough to remind Herod of the Jews’ profound devotion to their laws (291), and so of their implacable hostility to him as long as he persisted in violating them. It was for this reason – to avert open Jewish revolt – that Herod built fortifications throughout the country.

Now we should be sceptical about Josephus’ argument here.²⁶ He himself says that most Jews came to accept Herod’s illicit benefactions; furthermore, Josephus lists almost all Herod’s building projects in Palestine – even the city of Caesarea – among his fortifications in a way that makes it obvious that he is exaggerating Herod’s need for protection, and so the Jews’ hostility, and so too their single-minded devotion to their laws. But Herod’s benefactions remain an important theme in the continuation: soon after, drought struck the entire region (*AJ* 15.299–316). Herod’s treasury was empty because of his building projects, so he stripped his palace of gold and silver and used it to buy grain in Egypt (303–7), which he then distributed with exemplary care, being especially solicitous of the needs of the aged and infirm (308–10). Josephus (or Herod himself) thereby adapts Greco-Roman euergetism – which was not especially concerned with the well-being of the poor and the weak – to the norms of biblical charity. When he had cared for his own people (i.e. the Jews), he helped people in the neighbouring districts, so that he distributed 80,000 koroî of grain in his kingdom, and 10,000 outside it (311–4). Indeed (315), for the Jews, the hostility aroused by his alteration of *enia ton ethon* (and note this minimising qualification)

²⁵ Josephus’ discussions of the subject are surveyed in greatest detail by Frey 1934: 273–82 (cf. more recently, in less detail but with more special pleading Stern 1996: 419). On statues in particular, see *Ap.* 2.71–8: statues are forbidden because they are a practice useless to God and man; they so little confer honour on their subjects that the Greeks make them even of their favourite slaves. Our Jewish practice of honouring the emperor by sacrificing on his behalf is more effective. The story told at *AJ* 15.267–79 is manifestly meant to be embarrassing to the pious Jews, emphasising the silliness of their objections and even their *deisidaimonia* (277) – a word which may neutrally denote religious devotion or scrupulosity, but may also, even in Josephus’ work, mean ‘superstition’ or ‘fanaticism’ (see Rengstorff 1973: s.v. “*deisidaimonia*”). Yet in both the preceding accounts and the sequel Josephus repeatedly accuses Herod of violating Jewish *etbe* in a way which makes it clear where his own sympathies lay. This jarring effect is surely the result of Josephus’ inept pro-Jewish, anti-Herodian revision of his source, probably Nicolaus of Damascus, which should serve as a warning against the contemporary tendency to apply to Josephus a hermeneutics of goodwill (cf. Schwartz 1990: 157).

²⁶ Schalit 1969: 417–82, accepted and extended the implications of Josephus’ account, but regarded Herod’s activities as a necessary accommodation to Roman demands; for a different view see Smith 1996: 298–300.

was totally forgotten. And so much the more so when Herod completed what he himself regarded as his greatest benefaction – the new temple of Jerusalem. The account of the celebration accompanying its completion (421–3) will repay brief examination. It is generally unlike the accounts of Herod's other festivals, though it surely rivalled or even exceeded them in terms of the quantity of bloodshed. In its brevity it also forms a striking contrast with the account of the dedication of Solomon's Temple, which occupies approximately a quarter of *Antiquities*, Book 8 (50–129). Herod himself sacrificed 300 oxen, and the other great men vied to outdo each other in slaughter, though significantly Josephus here avoids the language of competitive public benefaction. Indeed, God, not the king, was the beneficiary of the people's gratitude, and they thanked Him above all for the king's enthusiasm and speed in executing the project. And there was more to it than this: the celebration coincided with the anniversary of Herod's accession, making the whole festival *perisemotote*. In sum, *philotimia* by the king and his retainers, honour and gratitude from the people, all expressed, not in terms of Greco-Roman *euergesia*, but in those of ritual and sacrifice – or so Josephus claims.

In Josephus' most extended and explicit comment on Herod's benefactions (*AJ* 16.150–9),²⁷ he speculates that Herod was, above all, motivated by passionate *philotimia*; he was generous as a way of securing *mneme* – memorialisation – for the future and the hope of good reputation in the present (this echoes the account in *War* 1 discussed above). But his constant drive for honour made him exceedingly harsh to his relatives and his subjects, because someone had to pay for all his generosity. Herod's need to be honoured was expressed both in intense deference to Augustus and his friends, and by his insistence that he be similarly deferred to by his own subjects, and he was enraged if disappointed. And he was constantly disappointed, because the very thing that he regarded as most beautiful, *therapeia* (157) – in both senses, of courting and of being courted – 'was alien to the nation of the Jews, who were accustomed to love righteousness more than glory'. So he disfavoured the Jews, since they could not flatter him by making temples and statues in his honour.

These themes are taken up again with some modifications in Josephus' comparison of Herod and Agrippa I as benefactors (*AJ* 19.328–31). This

²⁷ A passage Shaw 1989: 246–7, was right to call 'startling', though it has received little scholarly attention; for Shaw, this passage provides the background for Goodman's claim that euergetism was of little importance in first-century Jerusalem, an argument I am trying here to complicate. Shaw's (1995) observation is clearly the inspiration for his own (stimulating but not unproblematic) attempt to account for the failure of Roman rule.

passage amplifies the rather surprising theme of *AJ* 16 that Herod never bestowed favours on the Jews, but only on the Greeks. However, Josephus praises his grandson Agrippa, as having had a kindly character, and having bestowed benefits on all, but having been proportionately more beneficial to his Jewish *homophuloi*. Now Josephus' account itself strongly contradicts the argument that Agrippa was more generous to the Jews than his grandfather had been. In fact, Josephus is here conflating *euergesia* with character (Herod was *poneros* and Agrippa *praus*), and more strikingly with piety: Herod neglected the laws, while Agrippa loved living in Jerusalem, observed the traditions *katharos* (whatever this means), and never let a day pass without a rite of purification or a sacrifice.²⁸

Thus for Josephus, true *euergesia* consists of a combination of generosity, niceness (this can be paralleled in Greek and Roman sources),²⁹ ethnic solidarity and the appearance or reputation of careful legal observance, especially, perhaps, the funding of sacrifices. This is why Agrippa, whose actual benefactions to the Jews were dwarfed by those of his grandfather, is praised as genuinely *euergetikos*, while his grandfather Herod Josephus deprived – and successfully so, it might be added! – of precisely what he most strove for – *mneme*.

A final example of the Jerusalemite style in *euergesia* is provided by the royal family of Adiabene, the story of whose conversion to Judaism in the middle of the first century Josephus tells at length in *AJ* 20.17–99.³⁰ Though this story is not mentioned in *War*, the family is frequently mentioned there: several descendants of the royal family distinguished themselves in battle against the Romans (*BJ* 2.520). More prominently though, the family was responsible for building at least four of the major landmarks of pre-Revolt Jerusalem: three 'palaces', and Queen Helena's mausoleum, apparently just outside the city walls but conspicuous or centrally located enough to have been mentioned three times in the fifth book of the *War*. For our purposes it is worth emphasising that the family's building projects

²⁸ For discussions of Agrippa's alleged piety, and the relation between Josephus' Agrippa and rabbinic stories about Agrippas ha-Melekh, see Goodblatt 1987; Schwartz 1990: 157–71. Both argue that Agrippa's piety was not distinctively Pharisaic (Schwartz's argument for the king's pro-Sadducean orientation goes too far; no more convincing is the claim that rabbinic stories about Agrippas ha-Melekh are all either neutral or hostile; but his argument that Agrippa's piety was mainly a matter of trying to conform with the Jews' expectations is convincing; why his act was more successful than his grandfather's had been is unknown).

²⁹ At least to the extent that a proper leader is expected to practice *epieikeia* and *praotes*, and to have *eunoia* toward his constituents.

³⁰ The great bulk of the scholarship on this episode concerns the family's conversion and neglects its subsequent activities in Jerusalem. For some recent discussion, see Schwartz 1996.

in Jerusalem were monumental but private.³¹ Their benefaction took a different form, or rather forms, since Josephus states that they performed many 'good things' for Jerusalem, but never fulfils his promise to describe them all (*AJ* 20.53). Nevertheless, he does tell (49) how Helena, thankful to God for having preserved her son Izates from the many dangers (political rather than medical) she thought to be attendant on his decision to be circumcised, decided to travel to Jerusalem in order to thank God in person. But she arrived during a famine (51), and so dispatched her retinue to purchase food which she then distributed. Her son Izates (53) also sent much money for distribution to the hungry to the 'leaders of the Jerusalemites'. In any case (52), Queen Helena 'left behind the greatest *mneme* of her good deed to our entire nation' (note here that benefaction to Jerusalem is tantamount to benefaction to the Jews). In sum, while famine relief is, on the face of it, a perfectly normal type of benefaction, it was also in this case a kind of pious practice – one could think here of the resonances of 'feeding the poor of Jerusalem' in other contexts. As Josephus implies in the passage just quoted, it was also an expression of ethnic solidarity, for through it Queen Helena celebrated her recently acquired Jewishness. Furthermore, popular reciprocation took initially an oral rather than a plastic form – no publicly built statues, no monuments or honorary inscriptions, but rather, *mneme*, even, according to one odd manuscript reading of *AJ* 20.52, *mneme eis aei diaboome* (odd because Josephus was writing only a generation after the gift). One could go out on a limb and say that Josephus' story was meant to serve as part of this memorialisation, and go out still further and suggest that the surprising prominence of the family in rabbinic stories about pre-70 Jerusalem shows that Josephus' comment is no bland *hommage*, but is meant seriously: the Jews tried to remember their benefactors, and sometimes they succeeded.³²

One final point: although Josephus had remarked in *Against Apion* 2.205 that the Jews, as part of their general contempt for honour, eschew lavish funerals and grand funerary monuments this claim is repeatedly contradicted in his historical accounts, not to mention by archaeology. As we have seen, Josephus frequently mentions the conspicuous mausolea of Jerusalem, and some examples from the archaeological record have been mentioned above.³³ Furthermore, Josephus revealingly remarks in passing,

³¹ *BJ* 4.567; 5.55, 119, 147, 252; 6.355; M. Yoma 3.10 mentions Helena's votive gifts to the Temple.

³² Cf. the case of 'Agrippas ha-Melekh'. The most comprehensive treatment of the rabbinic material about Helena and her family remains Brüll 1874: 58–86; also useful is Dérenbourg 1867: 224–9.

³³ For a full survey see Kloner and Zissu 2003: 16–22, whose account furthermore demonstrates that even relatively modest burial caves often show signs of monumentalisation.

while describing Herod's funeral rites, that many wealthy Jerusalemites had impoverished themselves by providing excessively abundant public funeral feasts in memory of their relatives, as Archelaus did for Herod.³⁴ I would suggest that these facts, too, reflect the wealthy Jerusalemites' desire for memorialisation, but again expressed somewhat differently than among their neighbours – through private though monumental construction, and through food distribution (which the masses would remember as Josephus remembered Herod's funeral feast).

JOSEPHUS ON EUERGETISM

In the *Jewish War* Josephus consistently downplayed the Jews' cultural distinctiveness, while in his later work, *Antiquities* and *Against Apion*, he consistently overstated it: thus his description of the Jewish constitution as being utterly at odds with the Greek. According to *Antiquities* 4 and *Against Apion* 2, the Jews do not even have anything recognisably like a body politic; rather they are like a small sectarian organisation, all utterly devoted to a body of laws whose goal is to lead them to lives of piety and obedience to God, their only true ruler. These laws are administered by a priesthood which itself is not really a political class but (although Josephus did not have the language to say so) a clergy, religious functionaries distinguished for their own pious compliance with the ancestral laws. So the Jews had no use for any political or social institutions of the sort all Greek cities had, nor for any of the attitudes or practices which sustained them. They had no interest in honour or wealth, nor even in artistic and literary innovation. They cared only for the Law and for piety.

Now even in these programmatic accounts, Josephus subtly adapts his view. Thus, the obligation to share goods with the poor is presented not, following the Hebrew Bible, as an aspect of *imitatio Dei*, or sanctity, or national solidarity, important as these themes are for Josephus himself in other contexts, but as an aspect of social reciprocity: we are obliged to give charity in order to secure the gratitude of the poor. And Moses is represented as a classic *euergetes*, but an ideal one, who responds to his constituents' utter dependency on himself by offering them good legislation, not by lording it over them. In brief, in Josephus' more theoretical accounts of Judaism, there is little space, though not precisely a complete

³⁴ *BJ* 2.1: 'But this practice [of lavish funeral banquets] is a cause of poverty among many Jews, because they believe that if anyone omits to provide a feast for the masses – even under compulsion – he is impious (*oukh hosios*).'

absence of such, for anything resembling such typically eastern Roman imperial political/social norms as euergetism.

The narrative sections of *Antiquities* in general agree with the theoretical accounts, but nuance and complicate it. Here, too, the Jews utterly reject the normal trappings of Greco-Roman euergetism and are unresponsive and even hostile to the culture of *philotimia*, due to their unusually thorough devotion to their own laws. Hence they are hostile to Herod's theatres and games, and they refuse to honour him with statues and temples. Even the construction of the Temple they reciprocated, according to Josephus, only by thanking God, not the king. But Josephus does suggest in the later books of *Antiquities* that the Jerusalemites did in fact possess a culture of *euergesia*, though one which was different from that of the Greeks. For the Jews, benefaction *was* important, but it was only fully acceptable if combined with mildness of character and especially with piety – while gladiatorial games were an unacceptable gift, food distribution, provision of sacrifices (and, we are informed by other sources, supporting nazirites), and votive gifts to the Temple were likely, though not absolutely certain, to be admired. And the Jews did indeed not reciprocate their benefactors with statues and temples and honorary decrees, but with memorialisation apparently in mainly oral form; and monumental tombs and public funeral feasts may have been among the initiatives legitimately available to the wealthy to secure their own memorialisation.

The true situation in Jerusalem was certainly still more complicated. Even according to Josephus, the real-life priests of the first century were not simply a pious clergy but had at least some trappings – land, wealth, in some cases groups of friends and dependants – of an aristocracy; not all the Jews actually opposed Herod's theatres and games; and even the exiguous epigraphical evidence available shows that the normative culture of euergetism was not unknown there, and probably not only because Jews of the Mediterranean diaspora like Theodotus the synagogue builder or Nicanor the donor of the Temple gates imported it. Nevertheless, the character of the surviving epigraphical remains of first-century Jerusalem suggests that Josephus was not completely wrong: Jerusalem did not have a normal epigraphical culture because it did not have a normal euergetistic culture, and Jewish norms may indeed have been among the things hindering the development of such a culture, or rather providing it with a distinctive shape.

It is worth remembering that though the epigraphic culture and the practice of euergetism which in part sustained it were widespread in the Hellenistic and early Roman eastern Mediterranean, their local manifestations were very diverse: the Jews were not alone in producing unusual

local variants. For example, Angelos Chaniotis has recently written compellingly on the peculiarities of the epigraphic and euergetistic cultures of Hellenistic Crete – which bear comparison with those of early Roman Judaea.³⁵ As at Jerusalem, on Crete such euergetistic practices as existed received no epigraphic or artistic commemoration – the Cretans, like the Jews, erected no statues of their benefactors, but, Chaniotis suggests, commemorated their deeds orally. Unlike the Jews, though, the Hellenistic Cretans, like most Greeks, did have a highly developed epigraphic practice, which they used for treaties and other public documents, almost the opposite of Jerusalem's private, graffiti-dominated epigraphy. And the Cretans 'normalised' their practices almost as soon as the Romans took over, whereas the Judaeans – significantly – did not (though, I have argued elsewhere, they did in the aftermath of the revolts).

The fact is, though, that Jerusalem was not simply an eccentric Greek city, like the cities of Hellenistic Crete. Nor was it a Jewish version of a Greek city, like perhaps Tiberias or Sepphoris, or in some respects Caesarea. It was not a Greek city at all. It had something Josephus called a *boule*, but this seems to have been a very different sort of body from a Greek city council; in any case, there was no *ecclesia*, no citizen body. Rather, Jerusalem was the metropolis of the Jewish *ethnos* – this, in addition to local patriotism, is why Josephus could regard a gift to Jerusalem as a gift to the Jewish people as a whole – and especially in the first century in effect it existed fundamentally to house the Temple and support pilgrimage. It was thus a very abnormal city indeed. One reason Josephus thought that Jews cared only about piety may be that, while Jews in Tiberias may have had concerns very like those of citizens of other Greek cities, in some sense in Josephus' native Jerusalem it was true: everything – politics, commerce, benefaction – was subsumed in piety.

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³⁵ Chaniotis 2004.

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CHAPTER 4

Legal and social status of threptoi and related categories in narrative and documentary sources

Marijana Riel

My on-going study of $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ (*threptos*) and related categories in Greek narrative and documentary sources began as a study in terminology, but it inevitably grew into a study of legal, social and economic structures of Hellenistic Greece and the Roman east from 200 BCE to 300 CE. This study will include discussions about the origin and the legal and social status of children whose natural parents were unable or unwilling to raise them as their own, and the legal and social status of those who raised them. With nearly 1,200 inscriptions and papyri and a small sample of literary texts at our disposal, this project seems long overdue, especially in view of the growing number of important studies on the Roman family and the Latin correlative of Greek $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{o}\iota$ (*threptoi*) – Roman and Italian *alumni/nutriti*.¹

Prior to A. Cameron's study, 'ΘΡΕΠΤΟΣ and Related Terms in the Inscriptions of Asia Minor', published in 1939, only sporadic references to this social group were to be found in modern literature. As Cameron himself put it, 'no very systematic attempt has been made to determine their status or the nature of their relationships to other persons' (p. 27). Teresa Giulia Nani took up the problem of $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{o}\iota$ anew in a lengthy article published in 1944.² She enlarged her field of study by including all the sources available at that time. She collected about 230 inscriptions featuring $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{o}\iota$, their natural families and their nurturers. Since the publication of these two studies, the question of $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{o}\iota$ has been strangely neglected,³ although the amount of documentary evidence has more than doubled in the meantime. One of the main reasons for this neglect is that epigraphic texts, the most important source material

¹ E.g. Rawson 1986; Sigismund Nielsen 1987; Boswell 1988; Dixon 1988: chapter 6: 'Mother substitutes'; Bellemore and Rawson 1990; Corbier 1990 and 1992.

² Nani 1943–4.

³ Exceptions are the studies by Flood 1978; Bryce 1979; Karnezis 1979; Sacco 1980; Boswell 1984; Jones 1989; Guinea 1998.

for any study of *θρεπτοί* and related categories, are widely scattered in numerous periodicals and *corpora*. Another is that a very large number of documents contain no evidence on the legal or social status of the persons mentioned in them. Nevertheless, there is no justification for continuing to ignore this important segment of ancient societies when new evidence keeps emerging which often proves puzzling to its editors. Even after a comprehensive study has been undertaken, it will not necessarily eliminate all the ambiguities and uncertainties in every newly found text, but it will, it is to be hoped, provide a solid base for assessing them with more confidence and placing them in their correct legal and social context.

Etymologically, *θρεπτός* is originally a passive adjective of the verb *τρέφω*, meaning 'fed, nurtured, reared'.⁴ Used as a substantive, it denotes any person, slave or free(born), nurtured by someone other than their natural parents. The following questions can be asked: were they home-born slaves, exposed children, orphans, illegitimate children or stepchildren? How did they come into the hands of a foster-parent/master – through slave birth, purchase, rescue from exposure, adoption or by other means? Were they raised as ordinary slaves, foster-children, adopted children or as some form of apprentice (possibilities which are not mutually exclusive)?

Social and legal backgrounds varied considerably in the countries of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, and different economic circumstances may also have affected the condition of these children. Consequently, each area and period should be studied separately. A preliminary study of the distribution of *θρεπτοί* and related categories shows the following regions as being especially rich in evidence: central Greece, Macedonia, Calymnos, the Bosporan kingdom and Phrygia are distinguished by the number of Hellenistic and Roman manumissions/consecrations of *θρεπτοί*, Rome, Caria, Ionia, Lydia, Phrygia and Lycia by Roman commemorative texts. Lydian and Phrygian texts are most numerous – 270 and 167 texts, respectively.⁵ Mainland Greece and the islands, except Boeotia and Delphi, are underrepresented (256 texts), with Athens providing only 17 texts, Thessaly 14, Cos 7, Chios 6, Laconia and Rhodes 5, Phocis and Thera 4 each; there are 3 each from Aetolia, Delos and Paros, 2 each from Arcadia, Lesbos, Amorgos, Lemnos and Crete, and 1 each from

⁴ Cf. Karnezis 1979: 87. In Latin, as in Greek, many of the words connected with the care of children have a philological link with food and the feeding process (*alumnus, collactaneus, mamma, nutrix, nutritor, nutritus*, etc.).

⁵ These numbers are not definite, and I expect them to grow as I approach the completion of my catalogue. The majority of funerary inscriptions from all the regions under consideration date from the first three centuries of the Roman Empire. Cf. Ricl 2005 and 2006.

Corinth, Argos and Locris. On the other hand, Asia Minor has three times as many texts as the Greek mainland and islands together. There is no doubt that these numbers are partly due to the chance survival of texts on stone and partly to the epigraphic habit, general customs and wealth of the regions in question.⁶ We must likewise keep in mind the unrestricted choice of vocabulary in most inscriptions – their authors were usually free to select a synonymous term or no term at all when referring to their *θρεπτοί*, with the effect that numerous non-recognisable *θρεπτοί* are 'disguised' as *δοῦλοι* and *ἀπελευθέροι* or even *τέκνα*, and many others, identified only by their names, also remain unknown to us. In any event, one should take into account, as much as possible, the whole social context of each region represented in our inscriptional evidence. In many cases, it will not be possible to write even a short history of local *θρεπτοί* at any given period, while some regions and periods will offer abundant data on their numbers, names, ages, biological families, status in the foster families, occupations, etc.

The crucial question that must be addressed by anyone studying *θρεπτοί* and related groups pertains to their legal status. Although we possess numerous documents featuring *θρεπτοί*, most are insufficiently specific for detecting the exact status of particular individuals. The absence of status indications (filiation, slave or freed) as part of personal nomenclature, common from at least the middle of the first century CE,⁷ makes these texts virtually useless as evidence for the legal status of *θρεπτοί*. The picture offered by inscriptions is therefore often incomplete and the evidence open to several interpretations. With ambiguous sources at our disposal, we are forced to rely on other criteria (cognate terms pointing to slave or freed circles, mention of masters or ransom price for manumission, nomenclature of *θρεπτοί*, etc.), but a certain degree of uncertainty remains in many cases. From the methodological point of view, caution is the guide: every document must be carefully examined.

Literary sources show that the term *θρεπτός* was not unknown in classical Athens (Pherecrates, Lysias). In the Hellenistic period we find related terms (*θρέψας*, *σύντροφος*, *τρόφιμος*) in comedies (Alexis, Diphilos, Damoxenos, Poseidippos) and other literary genres of the times (Herodas).

⁶ E.g., we have only a few manumissions from Athens, Corinth, Argos or Arcadia, while Apollo's sanctuary in Delphi functioned as the most renowned Greek centre for the so-called 'sacral manumissions', and Macedonian and Phrygian masters were accustomed to inscribing copies of performed consecrations of their *θρεπτοί* on temple buildings. If we had more manumission records from other, less well-represented regions, the overall statistics would obviously change, but not drastically.

⁷ Weaver 1986: 155.

However, most of our evidence comes from the Roman Empire and from the Byzantine lexicographers and commentators on Greek literature. The situation with documentary sources is almost identical – a few texts from central Greece and islands can be dated to the middle and late Hellenistic period, but the bulk of inscriptions and papyri comes from the first three centuries of the Roman Empire.

Of all the inscriptions and papyri mentioning *θρεπτοί* known to me at present, more than a quarter belong to *θρεπτοί* whose servile status is beyond doubt. Two things need to be stressed in connection with this group: 1. some of the texts do not contain the word *θρεπτός* but a cognate term pointing to the same legal and social context (*θρέμμα*, *σύντροφος*, *τεθραμμένος*); 2. individuals from this group can be classified as slaves because they are either expressly designated as such (*δμῳίς*, *δούλη*, *σύνδουλος*, *φαμλία*) or have masters (*αὐθέντρια*, *δέσποινα*, *δεσπότης*, *κύριος*) whom they serve (*ὑπηρετέω*) and who can sell them, demand a ransom price (*λύτρον*) for their manumission or consecrate them to gods.

A large group of about 20 per cent of all the inscriptions show us slave *θρεπτοί* in the process of being manumitted and/or consecrated to various gods by their masters. The earliest manumissions and consecrations of *θρεπτοί* date from the second century BCE, and there are significant groups of these texts in central Greece (Boeotia: sixteen, all from the second century BCE; Delphi: fifteen, from c. 50 BCE to 100 CE), Macedonia (thirteen, from c. 170 to c. 280 CE), Bosporan kingdom (seven, from 16 to 173–211 CE), the island of Calymnos (twenty-two, all from 14 to 54 CE) and Phrygia (twenty-five, from 140 to 257 CE). I do not intend to discuss the legal nature of these documents, which have already been well researched and discussed elsewhere.⁸ As far as Macedonian and Phrygian consecrations are concerned, we know that their objects were some free-born children as well. Therefore, the sole fact of a *θρεπτός* appearing as the object of consecration does not necessarily imply his slave status, but other evidence in the texts themselves warrants the conclusion that all the consecrated *θρεπτοί* were slaves.⁹

Terminology encountered in documentary sources featuring slave *θρεπτοί* lacks precision and consistency. Nonetheless, several inscriptions and papyri are particularly instructive. Some of them show us the process by which the passive adjective *θρεπτός* had evolved into a noun, and others clarify its meaning by a complementary epithet or noun. These

⁸ Cf. Darmezín 1999, and the works mentioned in notes 9, 21 and 114.

⁹ Cf. Ricl 1995: 179–80, no. 30 = *SEG* XLV, 1727: *ἱερὸν κὲ ἐλε[ύθε]ρον*; 181, no. 32 = *SEG* XLV, 1729: *ἐφάψασθαι ὡς δούλης*.

phrases, namely *παιδία θρεπτά*,¹⁰ *κοπριαναίρετον θρεπτόν* (sc. *παιδίον*),¹¹ *κοράσιον τὸ ἴδιον θρεπτόν*,¹² *παιδάριον τὸ ἴδιον θρεπτόν* *οἰκογενές*,¹³ *θρεπτός δοῦλος*,¹⁴ *θρεπτόν ὃν εἶχε οἰκογενή*,¹⁵ and the evident interchangeability of the terms *σώματα*, *παιδίσκη* and *δοῦλος* with *θρεπτός*,¹⁶ show us that: 1. the term *θρεπτός* was not a legal term defining a legal category, but a pseudo-legal term of the same type as *παιδίον*, *κοράσιον*, *παιδίσκη*, which were all applicable to both slaves and free persons,¹⁷ and that: 2. since it was used to convey different meanings and designate both slave and free individuals, when used in manumissions or sale-contracts it could (but did not have to) be accompanied by other more common and less ambiguous terms for slaves.

The periphrases just mentioned permit us to surmise which meanings the term *θρεπτός* was not meant to convey. For example, in the registration of slaves belonging to a Roman family in Egypt,¹⁸ a *θρεπτός δοῦλος* is contrasted with two other slaves of the same family who were registered as *δοῦλοι οἰκογενεῖς*. This usage implies birth outside the master's house for the *θρεπτός* in question. The same seems to be the situation of an Aetolian *θρεπτός*¹⁹ who is neither *οἰκογενής*, i.e. born of a slave mother, nor a foreigner purchased on the slave-market, but a slave who reached his master's household through other channels as a child and was brought up there. The unusual phrase *θρεπτόν ὃν εἶχε οἰκογενή* in an inscription from Chaeroneia²⁰ might also imply that second-century BCE Boeotian *θρεπτοί* were not normally *οἰκογενεῖς*. Lastly, in at least three, possibly four Macedonian consecrations,²¹ we meet *θρεπτοί* who were undoubtedly purchased slaves. On the other hand, in Lydia and Phrygia we encounter complete slave families with grandparents, parents, children and cousins, whose members seem to have been born and raised in their masters' homes.²² We must also keep in mind that in the Roman

¹⁰ *IK* 17, 2 (Ephesos) 3712 = *SEG* XXXI 1001.

¹¹ *CPG* I 7 (8 BCE): the slave-child in question, entrusted to a wet-nurse, is first referred to as *τὸ θρεπτόν*, then as *κοπριαναίρετον παιδίον* and finally as *κοπριαναίρετον θρεπτόν*.

¹² *FD* III 6, 19; 29. The same slave girls are called simply *θρεπταί* in two documents recording their release from the *paramone*-obligations (*FD* III 6, 18; 30).

¹³ *FD* III 6, 27. ¹⁴ *PSI* V 4477. ¹⁵ *IG* VII 3376.

¹⁶ *IG* IX 1, 35; Gounaropoulou and Hatzopoulos 1998: 49; *IG* X 2, 2, 18 A.

¹⁷ Cf. Golden, 1985: 97: 'the Athenians saw slaves and children as occupying similar statuses within the structure of their society'.

¹⁸ *PSI* V 447. ¹⁹ *IG* IX 1², 1, 109, mid-second century BCE.

²⁰ *IG* VII 3376. Cf. also *FD* III 6, 27.

²¹ Petsas, Hatzopoulos, Gounaropoulou and Paschidis 2000: 10, 134; unpublished inscription from Edessa (Vavritsas 1986: 68); *IG* X 2, 2, 18 A.

²² *TAM* V 1, 818; Petzl 1990: 57–8, no. 13 = *SEG* 40, 1044; Naour 1985: 56–7, no. 14 = *SEG* XXXV 1167. Cf. the two articles mentioned in note 5.

Empire even home-born slave children could be reared in groups away from their mothers' place of residence, and that there were trained slaves assigned the duty of bringing up slave children; these childminders could refer to other people's δοῦλοι οἰκογενεῖς as their θρεπτοί.²³ Such cases will appear in what follows.

It is worth noting that the word θρεπτός, despite its vagueness and informality, was accepted and recognised both by the local Greek authorities involved in Delphic and Boeotian manumissions and by the Roman authorities in Egypt, Macedonia and Asia Minor.

The conclusion of this part of my discussion is that one of the usages of the term θρεπτός was to designate individuals of slave origin. It was synonymous and interchangeable with the more common words for slaves – δοῦλος, σῶμα, παιδίον, παιδάριον, παιδίσκη, κοράσιον, etc., and it usually, but not exclusively, designated slaves born outside their master's home, i.e. slave children purchased on the slave-market (including those sold by their own parents) and abandoned and rescued children. Roman law recognised natural children (*liberi naturales*) and *alumni* as two groups of persons so loved that it was inconceivable that one would use them as a pledge.²⁴ A number of inscriptions refer to or imply parental affection. In Asia Minor we even find three epithets coined to stress the affection between the θρεπτός and his nurturers – φιλόθρεπτος and φιλοθρέμματος for the nurturer,²⁵ and φιλόθρεψ for the fosterling.²⁶ Likewise, some slave θρεπτοί are praised in inscriptions as diligent, faithful and irreproachable servants.²⁷ For deserving servants the greatest prize was freedom, and for those less fortunate or those who died young, the final resting place was often provided by their nurturers.²⁸ In this context, the case of an Egyptian θρεπτή who ran away from her master²⁹ seems an exception, but we encounter other cases of θρεπτοί violating the moral norms of respect and dutifulness (εὐσέβεια, *pietas*) in relation to their nurturers.³⁰ One of these norms, as explicitly stated in a

²³ Cf. the case of C. Iulius Epaphra divi Augusti l., who is addressed as his *alumnus* by Carus *regis paedagogus* (CIL VI 8980).

²⁴ Dig. 20.1.6 (Ulpian): *Ulpianus libro septuagesimo tertio ad edictum. Denique concubinam filios naturales alumnos constitit generali obligatione non contineri et si qua alia sunt huiusmodi ministeria*; Paulus, *Sent.* 5.6.16. Cf. Rawson 1986: 174.

²⁵ Conze and Schuchhardt 1899: 206, no. 16; Takmer and Tüner 2001: 179–80 no. 1.

²⁶ TAM V 1, 815.

²⁷ IG II/III² 3, 2, 11205; IK 60 (Kibyra) 311; Dareste, Haussoullier and Reinach 1904: 250, no. 14; Naour 1985: 56–7, no. 14 = SEG XXXV 1167.

²⁸ On the Lycian practice of granting interment rights to θρεπτοί, cf. Bryce 1979: 310–12.

²⁹ P. Oxy II 298. ³⁰ Petzl 1994: 20, 44.

Mysian inscription,³¹ is ἀεὶ τοῖς θρέψασιν νέμειν καρπὸν ὀφειλόμενον ‘always to bestow due reward on the nurturers’. We actually find some slave and freed θρεπτοί providing for the burial of their nurturers and attending to their funerary rites.³² Not only was such behaviour regarded as morally incumbent on them, but it was often imposed as a condition of manumission. Sincere affection on the part of θρεπτοί for the people who often saved them from death, nurtured them and gave them freedom must not be forgotten. Along these same lines, in Asia Minor and elsewhere, we encounter slave θρεπτοί together with members of their masters’ families in epitaphs as mourners of the head of the family or his wife.³³ Duty and attachment kept θρεπτοί close to their nurturers even after manumission. Nevertheless, we should not automatically assume that θρεπτοί were always treated better than the other slaves of the household just because they were θρεπτοί: their treatment seems to have been dependent on the master’s disposition, and not something that could be counted on in each particular case.³⁴

Slave θρεπτοί mentioning their own families are found mostly in north-east Lydia.³⁵ Their epitaphs attest both a sense of family and the importance they attached to recording their existence as a family. Apparently, slaves were encouraged to form marital relationships and establish a family. One of the reasons could be economic – to breed slave children for the master or for sale. In any event, the free population of Lydia often expresses the same sentiment going beyond their immediate conjugal families and embracing large extended families. Obviously, the society as a whole provided favourable conditions for an enduring and stable family life in both free and slave circles. We must keep in mind that slave-owners elsewhere in the Roman world also discovered that it was in their interest that their slaves lived in families and had children, both because this made them more content and stable, and because the number of slaves in the household was thus augmented.³⁶

This fairytale picture of benevolent masters and cherished slaves is partly marred by the unembellished truth contained in two wet-nursing

³¹ *IK* 18 (Kyzikos und Umgebung) 504 = Merkelbach and Stauber 2001: 90, no. 08/05/06.

³² Vulić 1931: 54 (Ricl 1997: 33–4; *SEG* XLVII, 896); *IK* 18 (Kyzikos und Umgebung) 207; *MAMA* VII 60; *IG* IX 1, 39; *TAM* V 1, 18.

³³ *TAM* V 1, 795; *IK* 60 (Kibyra) 266. ³⁴ This is also the opinion of Flood 1978: 127.

³⁵ *TAM* V 1, 818: parents, brothers; Petzl 1990: 57–8, no. 13 = *SEG* XL, 1044: wife, son, mother, grandmother, brother and sisters, brother-in-law, other relatives; Malay *Researches*: 167, no. 291: brother and sister, relatives. Cf. also Naour 1985: 56–7, no. 14 = *SEG* XXXV, 1167, a particularly large family of three generations. The subject is now treated in my 2006 article.

³⁶ Bradley 1984: 47–51; 73–80; Sigismund Nielsen 1991: 223; Dixon 1992: 53–5.

contracts from Egypt.³⁷ In their businesslike style, devoid of all sentimentality, these two documents show us the darker side of the *θρεπτοί*–*θρέψαντες* relations where infants are dumped on rubbish-heaps and become slaves of their rescuers. There is no doubt that many *θρεπτοί* elsewhere in the Greek world were abandoned children, both slave and freeborn.³⁸ Names like *Κοπρία* or *Εὔρετος* encountered in inscriptions seem to offer proof of this.³⁹ Abandonment of supernumerary or undesirable children (*ἐκθεσις*, *expositio*)⁴⁰ provided the primary means that ancient families had for regulating family size and shape, but records of it are naturally scarce.⁴¹ Its purpose was not to remove a child from life, but from the family's responsibility, by offering it up to interested strangers. However, exposed children were entirely at the mercy of those who found and raised them and who could decide their future legal status: they could, eventually, provide a source both of domestic slaves and of children for those with an economic or psychological need.⁴² An exception, as far as the enslavement of foundlings is concerned, was the case of exposed freeborn children: since in the eyes of Roman law all natal status survived abandonment, they could not be retained as slaves if their free status could be proven, regardless of whether or not they or their parents were in a position to repay their upkeep.⁴³ By the same token, children born as slaves remained slaves, even if abandoned and reared as free by

³⁷ *CPG* I 4, 7. We find the term *θρεπτός* only in the second contract. Nonetheless, exposed children who could also be termed *θρεπτοί* appear in ten more nursing contracts in the same collection (nos. 5, 6, 11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26), as *ἀναίρετον δουλικὸν παιδίον* (4, 6), *ὃ ἀνείρηται ἀπὸ κοπρίας εἰς δουλείαν θηλυκὸν/ἀρσενικὸν σωματίον* (14, 15, 23, 24), *κοπριαναίρετον δουλικὸν σωματίον* (21), or *δουλάριον ἄρρενον ἀπὸ κοπρίας* (26).

³⁸ Cf. Pliny the Younger's letter to Trajan and the Emperor's response (*Ep. ad Traj.* 65–6). Boswell 1988: 118 overstates this fact by insisting that both *alumnus* and *θρεπτός* in the vast majority of cases denote children abandoned by their parents. Our evidence does not permit such sweeping generalisations. His definition of *alumni* and *θρεπτοί* as dependants in a relationship which does not arise from blood, law, or property is likewise unacceptable and superficial, as is his insistence on the voluntary relationship between *alumni* and their guardians. All in all, he paints too ideal a picture, partly because he regards *alumni* and *θρεπτοί* as mostly abandoned children. Cf. also Patterson 1985; Brulé 1992.

³⁹ On the question of Greek copronyms, cf. Perdrizet 1921; Pomeroy 1986; Hobson 1989: 163–4; Masson 1996, and the bibliography cited there.

⁴⁰ On the terminology of infant exposure, cf. Delcourt 1938: 36–46; Germain 1984; Huys 1989.

⁴¹ Cf. Cameron 1932; Germain 1975 (Athens in the classical period); Eyben 1980–1; Boswell 1984; Pomeroy 1984: 135–9 (Hellenistic Egypt, where one finds no traces of infant exposure in the Demotic papyri); Harris 1994. On the spontaneous mass exposure of newborn children as one of the reactions to Germanicus' death, cf. Versnel 1980: 558–62, 575–7.

⁴² Cf. Seneca, *Contr.* 10.4.13: *expositi in nullo numero sunt, servi sunt*. For a general evaluation of exposure and abandonment of children in Rome, cf. Harris 1994; Corbier 1999b: 1261–73.

⁴³ A slave *alumnus* who was born as a free person would belong to the category of *liber homo bona fide serviens* (Reggi 1958: 84–5; Lemosse 1975: 263). Cf. also Boswell 1988: 62–5; Memmer 1991: 33–6.

their rescuers. Alexander Severus ruled in 224 CE that their former owner could reclaim such children upon payment of expenses incurred by their nurturer.⁴⁴ It was Constantine who in 331 abrogated the irrevocability of natal status and denied the father or the master the right to reclaim the exposed child: from now on the *nutritor* would be free to raise him as a slave or a son.⁴⁵ Prior to that, in 313 and 329, the same emperor had legalised the selling of freeborn infants into slavery.⁴⁶ In 374 Valentinian, Valens and Gratian penalised exposure of free children by parents, allowing *patroni* and *domini* to continue exposing infants born to their slaves.⁴⁷ Despite these efforts, exposure of freeborn children continued in the following centuries, and Justinian in 529 again tried to protect the *expositus* by ruling that the father could not reclaim his child any more than the *nutritor* could enslave it: the exposed child became free.⁴⁸

The group of free θρεπτοί constitutes about 15 per cent of all the texts featuring θρεπτοί, all from the period of the Roman Empire. Twenty-two persons of this category are ascribed a freedman status or can be classified as freedmen on the basis of other reliable evidence, twenty-four share the family name (*nomen*) of their *nutritor* or use his personal name as a pseudo-patronymic, fourteen have *nomina* or filiation differing from the names of their nurturers, fifteen are free persons whose legal status or position within the nurturer's family is not always precisely defined, eight are probably freeborn, five probably free(born) and adopted and in one Phrygian family we find two stepchildren referred to as θρεπτὰ τέκνα.⁴⁹

By gaining freedom, θρεπτοί did not lose the position of θρεπτοί or σύντροφοι of their former masters and their children.⁵⁰ In other words, their relationships were lifelong and the θρεπτός did not lose all sense of his bond with his nurturers upon reaching freedom. This is easily understood if we remind ourselves that the terms adduced define not legal

⁴⁴ *CJ* 8.51(52).1. ⁴⁵ *CTh* 5.9.1. Cf. Bianchi Fossati Vanzetti 1983: 198–202; Memmer 1991: 64–7.

⁴⁶ *Vat.Frag.* 34; *CTh* 5.10.1. Cf. Bianchi Fossati Vanzetti 1983: 188–98 (195–6 on the dates of two texts, and 196–8 on the possibility that the second one also treated child exposure); Memmer 1991: 50–9; 62–4.

⁴⁷ *CJ* 8.51(52).2. Cf. Bianchi Fossati Vanzetti 1983: 212–5; Memmer 1991: 67–70; Harris 1994: 19–22; Corbier 1999b: 1265.

⁴⁸ *CJ* 8.51(52).3. Cf. Bianchi Fossati Vanzetti 1983: 221–3; Memmer 1991: 80–2.

⁴⁹ Souter 1897: 137–8, no. VIII.

⁵⁰ *IG V* 1, 1208; *IK* 40 (Prusa ad Olympon) 101; *IK* 60 (Kibyra) 266; Merkelbach and Şahin 1988: 150, no. 98; *AM* 13, 1888, 241, no. 19: θρεπτός καὶ ἀπελεύθερος; Bosch 1967: 401, no. 345: τρόφιμος (καὶ) ἀπελεύθερος; *IGUR II*. 2 896; *CPG II–III* 46: σύντροφος (καὶ) ἀπελεύθερος; *IAM II* 431: τεκνὸς θρεπτοῦ ἀπελεύθεροι.

status but one's informal standing in the family which was not altered by manumission.

Two freedman $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\omicron\iota$ who have names reappearing in their patrons' families could have been illegitimate sons of their manumitters,⁵¹ and some were slaves brought up as their own children by childless couples or individuals and then set free.⁵² A separate category comprises freedwomen who were $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\alpha\iota$ and wives of their nurturers.⁵³ In Justinian's Code it was ruled that the legitimacy of such a marriage depended on whether or not the man had raised the girl as a daughter from the beginning (*CJ* 5.4.26).

For the group of $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\omicron\iota$ whose *nomina* are identical to those of their nurturers, the most reasonable assumption, particularly in the cases of rare names, is that most of them were freedmen. The absence of regular formulas of adoption does not warrant viewing them as adopted children, although, as we shall soon see, it does not completely exclude this possibility.

The age of deceased $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\omicron\iota$ sometimes features in their epitaphs, showing that untimely deaths were not rare. The *lex Aelia Sentia* of 4 CE laid down minimum age requirements for manumission, both for owners (twenty years) and for slaves (thirty). If either condition was not fulfilled, demonstration had to be made to an official tribunal that there was 'good cause' (*iusta causa*), consisting essentially in close personal service, such as that of a nurse (*nutrix*) or schoolmaster (*paedagogus*), to the owner, or in a blood (son/daughter) or fosterage relationship (*alumnus/collactaneus/educator*), or in the intention on the part of a *dominus* to marry his freedwoman; otherwise the slave received freedom but not citizenship, joining the ranks of *Latini Juniani*.⁵⁴ Three Roman $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\omicron\iota$ whose family names are identical to those of their nurturers and speak in favour of their freedman status⁵⁵ were below the minimum age limit at their death. Perhaps this could be the reason why they use the designation $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\omicron\varsigma$, namely, to assert that, although freed below the minimum age prescribed by the law,

⁵¹ *IK* 60 (Kibyra) 266; Bean 1971: 32. That freeborn illegitimate children could be classified as *alumni* is shown by the case of a possibly illegitimate daughter of a freeborn concubine of the senator Cocceius Cassianus: referring to her as his *alumna*, he made her joint heir with his legitimate granddaughter (*Dig.* 34.9.16.1: *idque in testamento Coccei Cassiani clarissimi uiri, qui Rufinam ingenuam honore pleno dilexerat, optimi maximeque principes nostri iudicauerunt: cuius filiam quam alumnam testamento Cassianus nepti coheredem datam appellauerat, uulgo quaesit<a>m apparuit*). Rawson 1986: 179, thinks that Cocceius had tried to circumvent the possible difficulties regarding the child's right to inherit from him by pretending that she was an *alumna*.

⁵² *TAM* II 431; *CIG* 2664 = *GIBM* 918.

⁵³ Anderson, Cumont and Grégoire 1910: 5; *IK* 48 (Arykanda) 138.

⁵⁴ Cf. Bradley 1984: 92–3. ⁵⁵ *IG* XIV 1760; *IGUR* II.1 304; II.2 1031.

they nevertheless had satisfied other conditions which qualified them for citizenship.⁵⁶

To conclude, the second group of free *θρεπτοί* consists mostly of freed slaves and natural children, perhaps also some foundlings reared *loco filii/ἀνθ' υἱοῦ*⁵⁷ by the rescuers, as well as adopted free(born) orphans or children completely surrendered by their biological parents. The fact that nearly all the epitaphs were set up by nurturers prevents us from viewing these *θρεπτοί* as freeborn children fostered by but not surrendered to people outside their own family. Only two out of twenty-four free *θρεπτοί* sharing their nurturer's family name mention living parents.⁵⁸ In the first case, the whole family attested in Paros had freedman status, and in the other we learn that all the members of the Phrygian family in question were free, and that Aurelius Nouna and Matrona refer to themselves as *πατήρ καὶ μήτηρ* of a child whom they call *τρεπτός γλυκύτατος*. It is not impossible that the *θρεπτός* in question was an adopted child.

For the *θρεπτοί* whose family names differ from the family names of their nurturers we can safely assume that they were neither their freedmen nor adoptees (except perhaps in cases of women setting up epitaphs for children who had been manumitted or adopted by their husbands)⁵⁹ but free fosterlings, i.e. children (orphaned, illegitimate, poor) or freedmen of other families. There are no mentions of living parents in this group (but there are patronymics) and all the *θρεπτοί* are buried by their nurturers. The same situation prevails in other groups of *θρεπτοί*, where living parents and nurturers appear on the same stone in only seven cases.⁶⁰ Free boys and, to a lesser degree, girls, both orphans and with living parents,⁶¹ were fostered by couples and individuals who wanted a son or a daughter, either because they were childless or because they had

⁵⁶ Rawson 1986: 182 judges that if *alumni* began life as slaves, they seem to have had a good chance of early manumission, long before the legal age of thirty.

⁵⁷ Cf. the following expressions in Latin inscriptions referring to *alumni*: *alumno quem semper vice fil[i] dilexit; quam loco filiae diligo*. In north-east Lydia we find the term *υἱοθρεπτος* (Keil and Premierstein 1914: 31).

⁵⁸ *IG XII* 5, 171; Mitchell 1982: 250. ⁵⁹ *IGUR II.1* 311, 314.

⁶⁰ Ramsay 1883: 380, no. 3; Malay 1994: 150, no. 521 (this is a special case where a slave nurse calls her deceased master's son, himself deceased, her *θρεπτός*); *TAM II* 54, 615, 1028; *TAM III* 383.

⁶¹ Concerning the reasons for consigning care of one's own freeborn child to some other person or even exposing him (poverty, gender, social status, relationship between parents), cf. the case of Maecenas' slave Melissus who was cast out 'because of a disagreement between his parents' and refused to go back to his mother when she came to reclaim him (Suet. *De gramm.* 21: *Spoleti natus, ingenuus, sed ob discordiam parentum expositus cura et industria educatoris sui altiora studia percepit ac Maecenati pro grammatico muneri datus est. Cui cum se gratum et acceptum in modum amici videret, quamquam adserente matre permansit tamen in statu servitutis praesentemque condicionem verae origini anteposuit*).

lost their own children. Integration into the new family sometimes led to marriages with the nurturer's natural son or daughter.⁶² If the child's parents were alive, the father could retain his *patria potestas*, as evidenced by a Phrygian inscription⁶³ recording the case of one Didymos, brought up by Nikephoros of Motella and consecrated to Apollo Lairbenos by his father Didymos and his mother, and a Pisidian one⁶⁴ granting access to a family tomb to the tomb owner's θρεπτῆ Aurelia Nike and her parents Aurelius Maro and Aurelia Charitine.

The appearance of freeborn θρεπτοί⁶⁵ shows that freeborn children (including adoptees) assigned to non-kin caregivers or even to their own dependants⁶⁶ could be termed θρεπτοί. This usage in its turn proves that there was no social stigma inherent in the term θρεπτός, such as one would expect had it been used exclusively of slaves. Moreover, in three instances⁶⁷ a free(born) person and a slave are both designated as θρεπτοί in the same inscription.

Our inscriptional evidence presents no unambiguous cases of the term θρεπτός applied to disciples and apprentices, but this possibility cannot be ruled out, since apprenticeship also implies assignment of a child to the care (and training) of an expert and the establishment of long-term reciprocal obligations.⁶⁸ In several Lydian inscriptions we might have traces of the educational or apprentice fostering of slave children by individuals and married couples.⁶⁹

The exact terms of the arrangement entered upon between the free child's biological parents and its nurturer(s) (simple apprenticeship, fosterage or a full adoption) remain beyond our reach in most cases. B. Rawson draws attention to a passage from the *Digest* (29.5.1.10) where *alumni* are not included among the members of the household who should be defended by their slaves from the attacks of other slaves in the household (*senatus consultum Silanianum*) – 'they looked like adopted persons but were not adopted'.⁷⁰ The same author could not find any certain cases of formally adopted *alumni* in Rome,⁷¹ and she rightly says that 'the incentive for formal adoption is likely to have been less in the lower classes, who had

⁶² Buckler, Calder and Cox 1927: 49–58 = *SEG* VI, 137; *TAM* III 370 (?).

⁶³ Ramsay 1883: 380, no. 3. ⁶⁴ *TAM* III 383.

⁶⁵ *IG* IX 2, 804; *IGBulg* III 1, 1021; Malay 1994: 150, no. 521; *CIG* 3827, 4300d; *TAM* II 54, 615; *TAM* III 383; Maiuri 1925: 462; *IG* XII 5, 199; Souter 1897: 137–8 no. VIII. Freeborn *alumni* are also found in Latin inscriptions (Rawson 1986: 181–3; 9 out of 431 attested in the city of Rome, or 2.4 per cent of all the known *alumni*).

⁶⁶ The same situation is found in Latin texts mentioning *alumni* (Sigismund Nielsen 1999: 258).

⁶⁷ Petzl 1998: 39, no. 29; *TAM* II 54; *TAM* III 383. ⁶⁸ Cf. Dixon 1999: 222.

⁶⁹ *TAM* V 1, 764, 782, 786. ⁷⁰ Rawson 1986: 176. Also Sigismund Nielsen 1999: 259.

⁷¹ Rawson 1986: 183–4; 196.

little concern for political careers, little property to bequeath, and little need for formal *patria potestas*. It is, therefore, no surprise to learn that the two more or less certain cases of adopted θρεπτοί known to me⁷² both belong to the families of influential and well-to-do Roman citizens. The following observation by Cameron deserves to be quoted in this context: 'It seems likely... that even where the word θρεπτός (or an equivalent) is used of a legally adopted child it implies rearing from childhood and would hardly be applied to a son adopted at a later age, unless the term had been applicable to him before adoption'.⁷³

In Roman Egypt, a second-century law posthumously reserved for the *fiscus* one-quarter of the estate of an Egyptian who made a foundling his heir.⁷⁴ M. Corbier aptly notes that the foundling, a non-citizen, does not have a status which would make it normally suitable for adoption.⁷⁵ One could also add with Brulé that exposure signifies social death and loss of all status.⁷⁶

Most of the texts featuring free θρεπτοί are epitaphs set up for them by their patrons, nurturers, adoptive or step-parents, or a grant of admission to the family tomb. Far less numerous are the monuments set up and paid for by the θρεπτοί, or those in which a θρεπτός is found included among the grieving relatives of his deceased nurturer. Both groups contain epithets praising the deceased person: θρεπτοί appear as most valued and beloved (τειμώτατος, φίλτατος, προσφιλής), unforgettable and strongly missed (αείμνηστος, ποθεινός), most frank and faithful (ἀπλούστατος, πιστός), sweetest (γλυκύτατος), honest, worthy and causing no harm (χρηστός, ἀλύπως ζήσας), while their nurturers are praised as good and incomparable (ἀγαθός, ἀσύνκριτος). A votive stele set up for the well-being of one's patron or θρεπτός⁷⁷ is another indication of the existence of bonds of affection between some nurturers and their θρεπτοί. Only one epitaph was set up by a θρεπτός for his own family.⁷⁸

⁷² Maiuri 1925: 462; *IG* XII 5, 199. ⁷³ Cameron 1939: 38.

⁷⁴ *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* no. 41 = BGU V 1210, col. VI, 115: ἐὰν Αἰγύπτιος ἐκ κοπρίας [ἀν]έλῃται παῖδα καὶ τοῦτον υἱοποιήσῃται, μετὰ θάνατον τεταρτολο[γείτ]αι. This paragraph seems earlier than no. 107 (col. X, 238), which applied the same measure to all who collected male foundlings, regardless of whether they proceeded with adoption or not: τῶν ἀναιρουμένων ἀπὸ κοπρίας ἀρσενικά μετὰ θάνατον τὸ] τέταρτον ἀναλαμβάνεται. Cf. Perdrizet 1921: 87–8; Carcopino 1924–7; Maroi 1925: 377–83 (not a punishment but a tax on inheritance); Bieżunska-Małowist 1971: 131; Manca Masciadri and Montevicchi 1982: 149; 1984: 16–20.

⁷⁵ Corbier 1999a: 22. For the Greek situation, cf. Rudhardt 1963: 18, n. 43.

⁷⁶ Brulé 1992: 83.

⁷⁷ *IK* 32 (Apameia und Pylai) 115; *IG* XII 5, 171; 199.

⁷⁸ *TAM* IV 1, 187.

The largest group of documents pertaining to *θρεπτοί* (about 300 inscriptions) consists mostly of epitaphs giving only their single names, occasionally their age and a short positive reference to their character (*χρηστός καὶ ἄλυπος, ἀγαθός, γλυκύτατος, ἀνένκλητος, εὐχάριστος, εὔνους, ἄξιος, εὐσεβής, τειμώτατος*), but no details on their legal status. The great majority of these inscriptions come from the first three centuries CE, while earlier texts⁷⁹ are exceptional.

The first impression created by inscriptions from this group is that there were strong emotional ties between many *θρεπτοί* and their nurturers. The sheer number of epitaphs set up by nurturers, including simple 'protocol' ones, is an eloquent testimony to that effect. Moreover, we have several texts expressing strong grief at the passing of a beloved *θρεπτός*, at times in verse.⁸⁰ A Macedonian lady states that she brought up her deceased *θρεπτή* 'under her armpits' and that it was the passing away of little Geronti(o)n that induced her to build a family tomb.⁸¹ Other inscriptions demonstrate that *θρεπτοί* partook in religious ceremonies together with their nurturers.⁸² Some *θρεπτοί* from this group are mentioned together with their families, usually parents,⁸³ brothers and sisters,⁸⁴ wives/husbands and children,⁸⁵ brothers in law,⁸⁶ or nephews.⁸⁷

It is important to note that the position of *θρεπτοί* and *σύντροφοι* within a family was officially recognised, as appears from two census records set up between 293 and 305 in Lydian Hypaipa.⁸⁸ In the first column of the more detailed inscription we encounter the household of one Aurelius Hermolaos. His family numbers five persons: Hermolaos, aged 56, his wife Kyriake, aged 48, his two sons – Mucianus aged 3, Melito of unknown age and his *θρεπτός* Mucianus, also of unknown age. We cannot determine the legal status of Mucianus the *θρεπτός* – he could be a slave, a natural son, a foster-son, a stepson, or even an adoptive son. Another interesting inscription from roughly the same area⁸⁹ informs us that the 412 denarii stolen from the husband of Rhodia, slave

⁷⁹ Mastrokostas 1964: 312, no. 3 = *SEG* XXIII 435 (first century BCE); *IosPE* 709 (second century BCE).

⁸⁰ *IGUR* III 1255, 1344; *IK* 17, 1 (Ephesos) 3234; *TAM* V 1, 475; Anderson, Cumont and Grégoire 1910: 170.

⁸¹ Feissel 1983: 62; Gounaropoulou and Hatzopoulos 1998: 445; Ricl 2001a.

⁸² *IK* 21 (Stratonikeia) 409 (cf. Girone 2003: 21–42); Hardie 1912: 129, no. 14; 131, no. 24; Lane 1964: 36–7, no. 37; Lane 1978: 27, no. 126.

⁸³ *IGUR* II. 2 879; Gounaropoulou and Hatzopoulos 1998: 329; *IGUR* III 1255, 1344; *TAM* V 1, 150, 711; *IK* 20 (Kalchedon) 61; *MAMA* X 35.

⁸⁴ *TAM* V 1, 167 a, 711.

⁸⁵ *TAM* V 1, 167 a, 473 b, 475, 629, 753; *MAMA* I 44; *MAMA* IX 272; *TAM* II 249, 693, 694, 926.

⁸⁶ *TAM* V 1, 711, 804.

⁸⁷ *TAM* V 1, 804.

⁸⁸ *IK* 17, 2 (Ephesos) 3804–5.

⁸⁹ *TAM* V 1, 257.

girl of Flavia Menogenis, were found with Crescens, θρεπτός of Alkimos and Ekloge. The same differentiation between θρεπτοί and δοῦλοι is found in a sarcophagus inscription from Lycia.⁹⁰

Θρεπτοί of north-east Lydia, in addition to being the most numerous group, stand out by their families that resemble families of freeborn individuals from the same area.⁹¹ It is only in this region that we find the term σύνθρεπτος⁹² designating θρεπτοί raised in the same household. In Lydia we also meet θρεπτοί who in turn brought up other people.⁹³

About 230 inscriptions from the Greek world commemorate nurturers and foster-parents (οἱ θρέψαντες). This large group can be divided into two sub-groups. The first is made up of free and slave nurturers whose relationship with their nurslings is that of masters,⁹⁴ patrons,⁹⁵ foster-parents⁹⁶ and possibly adoptive parents.⁹⁷ The other group consists of nurses and educators, mostly of servile⁹⁸ or freed⁹⁹ status, rarely free(born) and not related to the family of the nursling.¹⁰⁰ As far as the second group is concerned, our conclusions on nurses (both male and female) as mostly family slaves or ex-slaves of their nurslings' families, is confirmed by researches on nurses in Rome.¹⁰¹ Their use points to an exploitative element in the life of the nurse occasioned by the birth of her own child or children.¹⁰² Some of the nurslings undoubtedly belonged to upper-class families,¹⁰³ but for the majority we can only say that they were free and mostly masters or patrons of their socially inferior nurses. I know only two cases of nurslings of recognisably servile background entrusted to the care of a nurse and/or nurturer,¹⁰⁴ but there may well be more examples that are difficult to identify.

⁹⁰ TAM II 693. ⁹¹ TAM V 1, 150, 167 a, 473 b, 475, 629, 711, 753, 804.

⁹² TAM V 1, 753. ⁹³ TAM V 1, 167 a, 753.

⁹⁴ E.g. FD III 6, 15; 43; 124; Dunant 1951: 311–2, no. 3 = SEG XII, 255; Petsas, Hatzopoulos, Gounaropoulou and Paschidis 2000: 19, 81, 95.

⁹⁵ E.g. IG X 2, 1, 504; IK 22, 1 (Stratonikeia) 1219; Iplikcioglu, Çelgin and Çelgin 1991: 191–2 = SEG XLI, 1367; MAMA VIII 436.

⁹⁶ IG II/III² 3, 1, 3969; IK 31 (Klaudiupolis) 160 (natural father is also the foster father).

⁹⁷ IK 18 (Kyzikos und Umgebung) 160; MAMA IX 270.

⁹⁸ E.g. IG V 1, 608; CII I, App. 3, 17: τοῦ δὲ θρέψαντος ἦν κύριος; Petzl 1990: 60, no. 17 = SEG XL, 1067; IK 18 (Kyzikos und Umgebung) 207; TAM IV 1, 134: the *nutritor* perished together with his two nurslings in an earthquake; IK 31 (Klaudiupolis) 103; MAMA VII 60; MAMA IX 98; IK 17, 1 (Ephesos) 3084–5.

⁹⁹ E.g. IG VII 2181; Naour 1981: 33, no. 14 = SEG XXXI, 1018; πατρικὸς ἀπελεύθερος is ἴδιος θρέψας; Vienna Schedae (Afyon): M. Sestullius Severus honours M. Sestullius Pindaros, τὸν θρέψαντα; Sterrett 1888: 417: ὁ θρέψας τὸν νεώτερον τοῦ πάτρωνος υἱὸν Ἀντίοχον.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. BCH 1896: 719, n. 2; Kritzas 1990: 10, no. 3 = SEG XLI, 732; IK 40, 1 (Prusa ad Olympum) 1056.

¹⁰¹ Treggiari 1976: 87–9, 96; Bradley 1985 and 1986; Joshel 1986; Dixon 1988: 141–67; Corbier 1999b: 1274–84 on the Roman practices of child nursing.

¹⁰² Cf. Bradley 1984: 72–3; Joshel 1986: 5–6. ¹⁰³ E.g. IG V 1, 608; IK 17, 1 (Ephesos) 3084–5.

¹⁰⁴ Petzl 1990: 57–8, no. 13 = SEG XL, 1044; IK 18 (Kyzikos und Umgebung) 207.

For instance, in north-east Lydia we find several inscriptions mentioning seven, eight, or in one case even thirty-four people reared by the same couple or individual.¹⁰⁵ A couple who nurtured eight θρεπτοί were slaves of one Antistius Priscus.¹⁰⁶ Is it reasonable to assume that a native or a slave family in this part of the Roman Empire could own seven, eight or even thirty-four slaves? Perhaps, but I would like to suggest the possibility that what we have here are couples and individuals specialised in bringing up and training other people's (or their masters') slaves or exposed and rescued children.¹⁰⁷ This possibility seems supported by the appearance of two Phrygian male educators styled ἄππας:¹⁰⁸ the word is synonymous with τροφεύς ('breeder, nurturer, tutor'), and the wording of both texts suggests that it is a professional description of one who is responsible for young children in a household, and a term describing a social relation.¹⁰⁹ In cases of slaves brought up outside their master's house, the use of a wet-nurse and childminders was simply a part of the slave-breeding process. Inscriptions give evidence only of affectionate relationships – if nurses and educators had a disciplinary role to play, this has not left any traces in the epitaphs.

Several inscriptions from the Greek world suggest the possibility that some consecrated children, both free and slave, were reared in sanctuaries.¹¹⁰ The case of Ion, abandoned by his mother and reared in his father's – Apollo's – sanctuary in Delphi as the god's slave is the best-known one.¹¹¹ The edict of proconsul Paullus Fabius Persicus, issued in

¹⁰⁵ TAM V 1, 764, 782, 786; Varinlioglu 1990: 88, no. 39 = SEG XL, 1093; Malay *Researches*: 146, no. 168.

¹⁰⁶ TAM V 1, 782.

¹⁰⁷ In *Dig.* 32.1.99 we find a mention of a slave born in the city and sent to the countryside to be reared there (*eum, qui natus est ex ancilla urbana et missus in uillam nutriendus*). Cf. Dixon 1984: 16; 1988; 1992: 128; Bradley 1985: 491–4; 512–4; 1986: 207–11.

¹⁰⁸ MAMA VII 170; MAMA VIII 357.

¹⁰⁹ The Latin equivalent is *tata* (Dixon 1988: 146–9; Sigismund Nielsen 1989). In *CIL* VI 21279a we meet a freedman who had been a *nutritor* of both his *patrona's* children and her *alumni*.

¹¹⁰ *IK* II, 1 (Ephesos) 18 c_{18–22} + 17_{46–48}; Baran and Petzl 1977–8: 307–8, no. 6 = SEG XXVII 729; *IK* 33 (Hadrianoi und Hadrianeia) 23 = Merkelbach and Stauber 2001: 106–7, no. 08/07/01; *SB* V 8681. Additional support to this hypothesis is now supplied by an unpublished inscription from the Lydian sanctuary of Meter Larmene on Mt Toma (territory of Saittai), recording a virgin *neokoros* who was also the *kleidouchos* of the shrine (information kindly supplied by H. Malay): Θεᾶς Λαρμενίης· Ἰουλία Μανίου Σαιττηνῆ, κλειδούχος καὶ νεωκόρος Μητρὸς Λαρμενίης, παρθένος γηράσασα. Julia refers to the goddess as her θρέψασα, 'foster-mother', implying perhaps that she lived in the sanctuary since her childhood and grew up there, possibly consecrated to the service by her parents.

¹¹¹ Eur. *Ion* 109–11: ὥς γὰρ ἀμήτωρ ἀπάτωρ τε γεγώς τοὺς θρέψαντας Φοῖβου ναοὺς θεραπεύω; 131–3: κλεινὸς δ' ὁ πόνοσ μοι θεοῖσιν δοῦλαν χεῖρ' ἔχειν οὐ θνατοῖς, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτοισ; 309–11: Ἰω· τοῦ θεοῦ καλοῦμαι δούλος εἰμί τ', ὦ γύναι. Κρ· ἀνάθημα πόλεως, ἣ τινος παθεῖς ὕπο; Ἰω· οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν' Λοξίου κεκλήμεθα.

Ephesos around 44 CE, shows that some public slaves employed in the sanctuary of Artemis Ephesia resorted to consecrating cheaply purchased slave children to the goddess in order to have their slaves reared at her expense.¹¹² The proconsul strongly condemned and forbade this practice.¹¹³

In Roman Macedonia and Phrygia we encounter cases of slave and freeborn children vowed to gods in their early infancy or in illness.¹¹⁴ The deed of donation put the donated person under the authority of the divinity. He was protected from abuse and separation from the god and no one was empowered to sell or alienate him in any way. He obeyed only the god and the god's power over the consecrated slave or child was uncontested. All the documents testifying to his origin and legal status (deed(s) of sale, birth certificates, receipts of repaid loans for which he was used as a pledge, etc.), together with the deed of gift transferring him to the god, were deposited in temple archives by the proprietor or the parent in the presence of temple officials. The deed of gift usually took immediate effect and slaves and freeborn children were handed over to the god by their owners or parents. A free(born) child offered to the Autochthonous Mother of Gods, whose sanctuary was discovered in the village of Lefkopetra close to Beroea, witnessed the donation performed by his mother Ladoma and 'gave himself up willingly' (ὁ προγεγραμμένος Παράμονος παρήν καὶ συνεπέδωκεν αὐτόν).¹¹⁵ This line suggests that Paramonos' consent was needed to make the act of donation valid. Some donated slaves, and perhaps also some freeborn children, were of a tender age, so that they could have been looked after and reared in the sanctuary, becoming *θρεπτοί* of gods and receiving instruction in order to discharge various duties in the sanctuary. We may hope that a future discovery will present us with a case of such 'divine' *θρεπτοί* reared by gods to become their servants. It is well known that the practice of child-offering persisted through the early Middle Ages in the form of *oblatio*, regulated by the rule of St Benedict in the sixth century.¹¹⁶

¹¹² IK Π, 1 (Ephesos) 18 c₁₈₋₂₂ + 17₄₆₋₄₈: 'Ομοίως δημοσίους δούλους, οἵτινες λέγονται βρέφη τοῦ τυχόντος διαφόρου ὠνούμενοι τῇ Ἀρτέμει καθιεροῦν, ἢν' ἐκ τῶν προσόδων αὐτῆς τρέφονται οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτῶν, ἀρέσκει τοῖς ἰδίοις αὐτοὺς παρέχειν τροφάς.

¹¹³ Cf. this similarly styled quotation from Ulrich of Cluny (second half of the eleventh century) on child-oblation, adduced by Boswell 1988: 298: 'after they have a houseful, so to speak, of sons and daughters, or if they have any who are lame or crippled, deaf and dumb or blind, hump-backed or leprous, or who have any defect which would make them less desirable in the secular world [the parents] offer them as monks with the most pious vows . . . so that they themselves are spared having to educate and support them or because this redounds to the advantage of their other children' (my emphasis).

¹¹⁴ Cf. Riel 2001b: passim. ¹¹⁵ Petsas, Hatzopoulos, Gounaropoulou and Paschidis 2000: 47.

¹¹⁶ Boswell 1988; de Jong 1996.

In all of the available sources – epigraphic, legal and literary – the same varied, multi-layered picture of the position and role of *θρεπτοί* emerges. Some were legally slaves, others, legally free, were treated as children in childless marriages, while others, though legally slaves, held a special position in the household thanks to their masters' affection. Many were manumitted, some even adopted. Some received bequests from their nurturers and many were entrusted to other family members or even communities for care. Many cherished *θρεπτοί* were so designated even as adults, and we often find them commemorated along with biological sons or daughters. The mere fact that so many inscriptions commemorating the deaths of *θρεπτοί* survive is eloquent testimony to the affectionate bonds between them and those who reared them. Many *θρεπτοί* were in a position to form their own families and thus find compensation for parental affection and care denied to them in early childhood when they were abandoned or forcibly separated from their parents. To study *θρεπτοί* and their nurturers is to study the moral development of the Greeks and Romans and to see them at their best, as nurturers of abandoned infants, slave children, orphans, children sold by their parents – a host of unfortunate little creatures thrown on their mercy. The nature of epigraphic evidence is such that the picture we receive partly embellishes the reality, but I would like to believe that most *θρεπτοί* were indeed *φίλτατοι* and most nurturers *ἄριστοι καὶ ἀσύγκριτοι*.

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CHAPTER 5

Ritual performances of divine justice: the epigraphy of confession, atonement and exaltation in Roman Asia Minor

Angelos Chaniotis

SAXA LOQUUNTUR: THE EPIGRAPHY OF ORAL PERFORMANCE

Stones speak.¹ And until the invention of a time machine allows us to observe ritual actions in antiquity as eye-witnesses, it is the petrified voices of stones that we will have to listen to. Sometimes they captured loud voices in the context of ritual performances, as in the case of an inscription from Lydia:²

1. Great is the Mother of Mes Axiottenos.
2. Glykon, the son of Apollonios, and Myrtion, the wife of Apollonios, (set up) this praise [*eulogia*] for Mes Ouranios and for Mes of Artemidoros who rules over Axiotta, for their rescue and for that of their children.
3. For you, Lord, have shown mercy, when I was a captive.
4. Great is your holiness! Great is your justice! Great is your victory! Great your punishing power! Great is the Dodekatheon that has been established in your vicinity!
5. For the son of my brother Demainetos made me his captive.

¹ This paper stems from my research in the project 'Rituals and Communication in the Civic Communities of Ancient Greece', which is part of the project 'Ritual Dynamics' (Sonderforschungsbereich 619 'Ritualdynamik') funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (2002–9). I am very grateful to Prof. Hasan Malay (Izmir), who made a series of new texts available before their publication (Herrmann and Malay 2007). Abbreviations of epigraphic corpora are those used by *SEG*.

² Malay 2003= *SEG* LIII 1344 (Lydia, north of Ayazviran, 57 CE): Μεγάλη Μήτηρ Μηνὸς Ἀξιοττηνοῦ. Μηνὶ Οὐρανίῳ, Μηνὶ Ἀρτεμιδώρου Ἀξιοττα κατέχοντι. Γλύκων Ἀπολλωνίου καὶ Μύρτιον Γλύκωνος εὐλογίαν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίας καὶ τῶν ἰδίων τέκνων. Σὺ γάρ με, κύριε, αἰχμαλωτιζόμενον ἠλέησες. Μέγα σοι τὸ ὅσιον, μέγα σοι τὸ δίκαιον, μεγάλη νείκη, μεγάλοι σαὶ νεμέσεις, μέγα σοι τὸ δωδεκάθεον τὸ παρὰ σοὶ κατεκτισμένον. Ἥχμαλωτίσθην ὑπὸ ἀδελφοῦ τέκνον τοῦ Δημαινέτου. Ὅτι τὰ ἐμὰ προέλειψα καὶ σοὶ βοίθειαν ἔδωκα ὡς τέκνω. Σὺ δὲ ἐξέκλεισές με καὶ ἡχμαλώτισάς με οὐχ ὡς πάτρω, ἀλλὰ ὡς κακοῦργον. Μέγας οὖν ἐστί Μεις Ἀξιοττα κατέχων. Τὸ εἰκάνοι μοι ἐποίησας. Εὐλογῶ ὑμῖν. Ἐτους ρμβ', μηνὸς Πανήμου β'.

6. For I had neglected my own affairs and helped you, as if you were my own son. But you locked me in and kept me a captive, as if I were a criminal and not your paternal uncle!
7. Now, great is Mes, the ruler over Axiotta!
8. You have given me satisfaction. I praise you.

Although this inscription characterises itself as ‘praise’ (*eulogia*),³ its affinity to a group of inscriptions commonly labelled ‘confession inscriptions’ (‘Beichtinschriften’) is obvious.⁴ The term ‘confession inscriptions’ designates a continually growing group of documents from Lydia and Phrygia (first to third centuries CE) written on stone stelae and set up in sanctuaries.⁵ They owe this name to the fact that they contain the confession of religious offences, crimes and misdemeanours, as well as records of the ritual acts with which the angry gods were propitiated. The confessions are usually accompanied by exaltations of the divine power. Their dedicators were persons who believed that they were persecuted by a divinity through illness, accident, death or destruction of their property because of an offence committed either by them or by relatives. The offences recorded are primarily of a religious nature: disregard of purity regulations, insult to the gods by ignoring their commands, offences against sacred property, perjury and, in a few cases, delinquencies commonly prosecuted by property and criminal law, such as theft, neglect to repay a debt, cheating, insult, slander, injury, adultery and sorcery.⁶ Although such texts have been known for almost a century, a great impetus to their study has been given since the 1990s through the publication of new texts and above all through the publication of corpora by Georg Petzl and Marjana Riel, who have thus made the ‘confession inscriptions’ widely accessible to the students of religion in Roman Asia Minor.⁷

³ For *eulogia/eulogein* cf. Petzl 1994: nos. 16, 20, 33, 34, 36, 37, 43, 44, 54, 62–4, 68, 69, 80, 96, 97 and 101; Herrmann and Malay 2007: 110–13, no. 84; see also nn. 115 and 135. On these terms see Robert 1964: 28–30; de Hoz 1999: 119; Belayche 2006b: 76–81.

⁴ Malay 2003: 17–18.

⁵ The bibliography on the ‘confession inscriptions’ is already vast and continually increasing. I list only a few recent and more general studies, in which one can find further bibliography: Petzl 1994, 1997 and 1998a; Chaniotis 1995, 1997, 2004a and 2004b; Riel 1995a, 1995b, 2003a and 2003b; de Hoz 1999: 114–24; Brixhe 2001; Versnel 2002: 63–67; Rostad 2002 (cf. my remarks in *EBGR* 2002: no. 129); Schnabel 2003; Gordon 2004a and 2004b; Belayche 2006b and 2007: 82–6. For new texts see below n. 7. For the wider religious context see Björck 1938; Petzl 1991, 1995 and 1998a; Mitchell 1993: II, 11–51; de Hoz 1999; Ritti, Simsek and Yildiz 2000; Riel 2003a; Boffo 2004; Belayche 2006b.

⁶ Riel 1995a; Chaniotis 1997: 354–5 and 2004a: 4; Gordon 2004a: 187.

⁷ After the publication of these corpora, the following new ‘confession inscriptions’ have been published: Riel 1997 (*SEG* XLVII 1751 = *CIG* 4142); Petzl 1997 and 1998b (*SEG* XLVII 1651 and 1654; cf. Riel 2003b); Malay *Researches*: no. 217; Malay and Sayar 2004 = *SEG* LIV 1225; Herrmann and Malay 2007: nos. 46, 47, 54–6, 66, 70, 83–5; cf. 72. Malay *Researches*: nos. 111–2, Malay 2003 and Herrmann and Malay 2007: nos. 51–2 are closely related to the ‘confession inscriptions’.

According to the most recent reconstructions of the procedure revealed by these texts,⁸ when a person, intentionally or not, committed a crime or violated a norm and thought that the god was inflicting punishment, he went to a local sanctuary and asked for help. By means of oracles, divine messengers or dreams, but also with the active assistance of the priests, the god revealed the cause of his anger and the way in which atonement could be made. The sanctuaries were also recipients of accusations submitted to the priests by a wronged party, requesting their intervention. Subsequently the priests arbitrated between the parties in the conflict, swore in the parties, cursed the offenders in order to attract the interest of the gods to the offence, interpreted the signs of the divine will and consulted those who wished to atone for their misdemeanours.

Exactly as in the 'confession inscriptions', the subject of the text quoted above is human misdemeanour – the bad treatment of a man by an ungrateful nephew – the subsequent revelation of divine punishment and the praise of the gods. Its difference from the 'confession inscriptions' lies in the fact that in this case the misdemeanour is not confessed by the culprit (or a member of his family), but narrated by the victim. It has been pointed out that the confession of the sin is not the only and possibly not the primary aim of the 'confession inscriptions', and for this reason the designations 'propitiatory', 'reconciliation' and 'exaltation inscriptions' have been suggested.⁹ The new text certainly justifies the criticism of the term 'confession inscription' and confirms the need to study the 'confession inscriptions' in close connection with other evidence of divine justice (exaltations, prayers for justice, funerary imprecations and the like),¹⁰ but also in close connection with dedications and vows. Many 'confession inscriptions' refer to the vows made by the 'sinners' in order to stop the divine punishment; others designate the stelae with their confessions and exaltations as thanksgiving dedications.¹¹ An inscription from Maionia (235 CE), which contains a confession (cutting down trees in a sacred grove), is an excellent example as it designates itself as a thanksgiving

⁸ Riel 1995a; Chaniotis 1997 and 2004a; Rostad 2002; Gordon 2004a and 2004b.

⁹ 'Propitiatory inscriptions': Chaniotis 1995; 'reconciliation inscriptions': Rostad 2002; 'exaltation inscriptions': this term was suggested by N. Belayche in a paper presented during the colloquium *Variations sur la représentation du divin* (Liège, 18 December 2004).

¹⁰ This is consistently done by Versnel 1991, 1994, 1999 and 2002; cf. Chaniotis 2004a: 5–11.

¹¹ Vows: e.g. Petzl 1994: nos. 42, 48, 66 (εὐχὴν ὑπὲρ ὧν ἁμαρτοῦσα ἐπέτυχεν), 81, 84 (κολασθεῖσα... εὐχὴν ἀνέθηκα), 113 (εὐξάμενος ὑπὲρ τοῦ κολ[ασθέ]ντος βοός) and 122 (κολασθεῖσα... εὐχὴν); Herrmann and Malay 2007: 71, no. 47. Thanksgiving dedications: Petzl 1994: nos. 4, 10, 11 (εὐχαριστῶν), 12, 19, 21, 22, 38, 58, 73, 74, 94 (κολασθεῖσα καὶ θεραπευθεῖσα διὰ τῆς Εἰνύας χιρὸς εὐχαριστοῦσα ἀνέθηκα), 114 (κολασθεῖσα καὶ σωθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐχ[αριστοῦσα ἀνέθηκα]). See also Herrmann and Malay 2007: 70–1, no. 46 and 82–3, no. 56.

dedication in fulfilment of a vow.¹² We may suspect that the background of many thanksgiving dedications in these regions may have been divine punishment, glossed over by the authors of the texts. I present only one example, a new dedication from Silandos (209 CE): 'Great Zeus of the Twin Oaks appeared to Poplianos and demanded a stele which he gives (ἀποδίδει) together with his wife, praising and thanking the god.'¹³ The verb used for the dedication (ἀποδίδω) is precisely the verb that numerous 'confession inscriptions' and related texts use in the context of propitiatory offerings (see below note 160). The term 'confession inscriptions' is misleading because it draws unnecessary boundaries between related groups of texts. But in this paper I am not in search of a more suitable term, but of a better understanding of the ritual performances in the sanctuaries of Lydia and Phrygia where inscriptions referring to divine justice and to the manifestation of divine power were set up.

It should be stated right at the beginning that we have not a single description of rituals connected with the idea of divine justice in the small urban centres and the village communities of Roman Asia Minor, despite the fact that they were performed publicly and, to judge from the number of sources, quite often.¹⁴ The iconography of the stelae refers to rituals in a very rudimentary manner, e.g. by representing worshippers with their right hand raised or placing an offering on an altar.¹⁵ Any reconstruction unavoidably resembles a jigsaw puzzle. And of course we can never be sure if a piece of information delivered by a text in one sanctuary can really serve to explain an inscription found in another.¹⁶ Both regional differences and deviations from the norm in one and the same place must be taken for granted, the latter in particular because we are dealing with emotionally loaded rituals.¹⁷

Let us look at the text from Lydia more closely. I have divided it into sections (nos. 1–8) in order to facilitate its analysis. The text itself provides no direct information as regards the setting, but there can be little doubt that we are dealing with a record of words said – certainly in a loud voice – in a sanctuary, possibly in the presence of an audience. The text begins with an acclamation (no. 1), followed by two other sets of acclamations

¹² Petzl 1994: no. 76: *κολασθεῖς εὐξάμενος εὐχαριστήριον ἀνέστησα*.

¹³ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 99–100, no. 71.

¹⁴ For the importance of rituals for the interpretation of these texts cf. Rostad 2002. The importance of the presence of an audience in the manifestations of divine power was recognised by Robert 1983: 522.

¹⁵ Raised hand: see n. 117. Placing an offering on an altar: Petzl 1994: no. 3; cf. Gordon 2004a: 182, fig. 3, 186, fig. 5, 191, figs. 8–9.

¹⁶ This is correctly observed by Gordon 2004a: 182–3.

¹⁷ On the role of emotions in the dynamics of rituals see Chaniotis 2006.

(nos. 4 and 7). Acclamations, both of religious and of profane content (e.g. acclamations for statesmen, circus factions or cities), are formulaic texts: ‘Great is the so and so’, ‘great is the name or the power of the so and so’, etc.¹⁸ Sometimes they occurred spontaneously, when humans experienced the power of god(s). This is the case, e.g. in Panamara, when the sanctuary of Zeus and Hecate was attacked by the troops of Labienus (42 BCE). Zeus’ fire burned the weapons of the enemy, and a sudden storm, with thunder and lightning, terrified the assailants to such an extent that ‘many were those who were deserting, asking for forgiveness and crying out with loud voice “Great is Zeus Panamaros”’ (ἔτι δὲ ἀναβοῶν[των] μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ Μέγαν εἶναι Δία Πανάμαρον).¹⁹ In most cases, however, acclamations were part of ritual actions. I suspect that the *euphemia* (‘use of good words’) which is expected by the worshippers during certain rituals comprised acclamations in honour of the gods. The term *euphemia* – sometimes misinterpreted as ‘ritual silence’ – prescribes the use of pious language during the performance of rituals.²⁰ A good example of the place of acclamations in ritual contexts is provided by a group of graffiti in the gymnasium at Delphi (second and third centuries CE).²¹ They record acclamations for Apollo and for victorious athletes during an athletic contest, probably during the Pythian festival.

Good Fortune! There is one [true] god! Great is the god! The name of the god is the greatest! Great is Apollo Pythios! Great is the Fortune of the Delphians!²²

or

Good Fortune! There is one [true] god in heaven! Great is Apollo Pythios! Great is the Fortune of the Delphians.²³

Given the enormous significance of acclamations in rituals, we should not be surprised if the acclamations (*eulogia*) recorded in the text from Lydia were heard in the sanctuary in which the stele was set up. The most probable context is that of the erection of the stele itself (cf. no. 2: ‘they set

¹⁸ On acclamations in general see Roueché 1984 and 1989: no. 83; for some examples in a non-religious context see *SEG* XXXVIII 1172; L 1342–3; LI 1813; *I.Perge* 331. For the importance in the study of religion, see Belayche 2005 and 2007; Chaniotis 2008. The subject is also treated by N. Belayche in a forthcoming article ‘*Tibi ante alios deos*’ (Plaute). Expressions rituelles de la “distinction” au sein du monde divin à l’époque impériale’ (personal communication).

¹⁹ *IK* 21 (Stratonikeia) 10; Roussel 1931.

²⁰ Gödde 2003: especially 27–30. ²¹ Queyrel 2001 (*SEG* LI 613–31).

²² *SEG* LI 614: Ἀγαθῇ Τύχῃ· εἷς θεός· μέγ[ας] θεός· μ[έγιστος] οὐ ὄνομα τ[οῦ] θε[οῦ]· Πύθιος μέγ[ας] Ἀπ[όλλων]· μεγάλη Τύχῃ Δελφῶν].

²³ *SEG* LI 615: Ἀγαθῇ Τύχῃ· εἷς θεός ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· μέγ[ας] Πύθιος Ἀπ[όλλων]· μ[έγιστος] Τύχῃ Δελφῶν.

up this praise for Mes Ouranios and for Mes of Artemidoros, who rules over Axiotta, for their rescue and for that of their children'; see below).

The first acclamation (no. 1) is followed by the dedicatory formula (no. 2). The next phrase (no. 3: 'for you, Lord, showed mercy, when I was captured') is an expression of gratitude for divine assistance. Hundreds of dedications are labelled as 'thanksgiving offerings' (ὑπὲρ εὐχαριστίας, εὐχαριστήριον, εὐχαριστῶν, χαριστήριον/χαριστήρια and the like).²⁴ That the dedication of the *ex voto* (ἀφιέρωσις, καθιέρωσις) involved some form of ritual action (e.g. libation or sacrifice) is certain, but it must often have involved also an oral performance, i.e. an exaltation, a prayer or a pronouncement, in the presence of an audience. This is directly attested, e.g. for the sanctuary of Asklepios on the Insula Tiberina in Rome (second century CE). As we may infer from the healing miracles recorded in an inscription,²⁵ after his rescue the worshipper was expected to come to the sanctuary and express his gratitude to the god in public (lines 9–10: καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἡὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ καὶ ὁ δῆμος συνεχάρη αὐτῷ; lines 13–14: καὶ ἐλθὼν δημοσίᾳ ἡὐχαρίστησεν ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ δήμου; line 18: καὶ ἐλήλυθεν καὶ ἡὐχαρίστησεν δημοσίᾳ τῷ θεῷ; cf. lines 4–5: τοῦ δήμου παρεστῶτος καὶ συνχαιρομένου). Presumably, the phrase 'for you, Lord, have shown mercy, when I was a captive' reflects what Glykon said aloud when he came to the sanctuary of Mes to set up his inscription. Since sanctuaries were not always open and accessible,²⁶ we may suspect that dedications – in particular in rural sanctuaries – did not take place on any given day, but preferably on the days of festivals. One may notice, for example, that the consecration of slaves in the sanctuary of Meter Theon Autochthon at Leukopetra (near Beroia in Macedonia) often took place on 18 Dios.²⁷

After the motive for the dedication is explained, a second group of acclamations follows (no. 4) in which the worshipper characterises the various qualities of Mes: his holiness, his justice, his victory, his punishing power.²⁸ The reference to the Twelve Gods ('great is the Dodekathemon that

²⁴ For an overview see Habicht 2001. For the formulaic expressions see, e.g., the indices of *SEG* and *EBGR*.

²⁵ *Syll.*³ 1173 = *IGUR* I 148.

²⁶ A *lex sacra* from Oropos (fourth century BCE) prescribes, e.g., the days on which the priest had to be in the sanctuary – and make it accessible to worshippers; *I. Oropos* 277 = *LSCG* 69.

²⁷ *I. Leukopetra* 20, 70, 76, 86, 91–5, 108, 116–18. For dates in the 'confession inscriptions' see below n. 132. One observes that three texts are dated in 12 Panemos and another three on 12 Aoudnaios (nos. 24, 64 and 77), possibly on the dates of festivals?

²⁸ In *EBGR* 2003; no. 99, J. Mylonopoulos does not exclude the possibility that these properties were represented as divine personifications.

has been established in your vicinity!') reveals the setting of the acclamations: they took place in Mes' sanctuary, where the Iranian Moon God was worshipped, together with an Anatolian group of the Twelve Gods.²⁹ The expression τὸ Δωδεκάθεον τὸ παρὰ σοι κατεκτισμένον implies that images of the Twelve Gods (statues or reliefs) were set up in the sanctuary. It was in the presence of these images, or of symbols of the gods, i.e. the twelve sceptres often mentioned in 'confession inscriptions' (see below), that Glykon performed his acclamations.

The next phrase (no. 5) contains Glykon's accusations against his nephew, whose name is not given. In the course of a family quarrel, presumably involving property claims, a common theme in the 'confession inscriptions',³⁰ Glykon was obviously locked up by his nephew until divine punishment (illness, accidents, etc.) forced the nephew to set him free. After his liberation, Glykon came to the sanctuary, certainly accompanied by his nephew, who was present when Glykon not only praised the god, but also when he brought forth his accusations in a very emotional manner (no. 6): 'For I had neglected my own affairs and helped you, as if you were my own son. But you locked me in and kept me captive, as if I were a criminal and not your paternal uncle!' Glykon uttered these phrases turning to his nephew and addressing him directly. We may suspect that Glykon's dedication and praise were accompanied by the nephew's propitiation of the god according to the manner often described in 'confession inscriptions' (public confession, request for forgiveness, performance of a propitiatory ritual, praise). Unfortunately, among the preserved inscriptions we do not find a case which is represented both by the culprit (confession and propitiation) and his victim (thanksgiving and praise), but conceivably Glykon's nephew set up his own inscription. The text ends with a final acclamation (no. 7) and a thanksgiving address that corresponds to the principle of *do ut des* (no. 8):³¹ 'You have given me satisfaction. I praise you.'

The new inscription from Lydia is a good example of the indirect records of rituals and speech acts preserved in the epigraphy of theodicy in Roman Asia Minor. In the following pages I shall attempt to summarise the information provided by the 'confession inscriptions' and related

²⁹ The Anatolian Twelve Gods are often mentioned in inscriptions and represented in dedicatory reliefs, especially in Lykia (Freyer-Schauenburg 1994). These Twelve Gods may be related to Hittite or Luwian religious traditions. For the Dodekatheon in Lydia (Saittai) see *SEG* XXIX 1179; de Hoz 1999: 219, no. 39.17.

³⁰ Family quarrels in 'confession inscriptions': e.g. Petzl 1994: nos. 17, 20, 21, 44, 47 and 69.

³¹ On the significance of this principle for the 'confession inscriptions' see Chaniotis 2004a: 19.

texts on the performance of rituals in connection with ideas of divine punishment. Unavoidably, this reconstruction draws heavily upon my earlier publications on divine justice and the 'confession inscriptions',³² but it also considers material that has been published recently. All the evidence on rituals in the relevant inscriptions ('confession inscriptions', funerary imprecations, prayers for justice and dedications) is indirect, but it reveals a large variety of ritual actions that include the cursing of opponents, prayers for justice and oaths, the ritualised cession of disputed property to gods, rituals of divination in order to determine the cause of divine anger and rituals of atonement (public confession, acclamations and public praise of the gods, sacrifices, purifications and the erection of a stele).

CURSES, PRAYERS FOR JUSTICE AND OATHS:
RITUALISED PUBLIC APPEAL TO DIVINE JUSTICE

One of the most informative texts, often quoted in relevant studies, is an inscription that concerns the conflict between Tatias and her environment.³³

Since Jucundus was struck by insanity and it was rumoured by everybody that he had been given a potion by his mother-in-law Tatias, Tatias set up a sceptre and deposited imprecations in the temple, as defending herself against an imputation, although she was conscious [of her guilt]. For this reason the gods exercised a punishment which she did not escape. Similarly, her son Sokrates, when he was passing by the entrance which leads to the grove, having a sickle in his hands, with which one cuts down vines, the sickle fell on his foot and, thus, he suffered punishment within a day and died. The gods at Azitta are great! They demanded that the sceptre and the imprecations made in the temple be annulled; Sokrateia, Moschas, Jucundus and Menekrates, the children of Jucundus and Moschion and grandchildren of Tatias, annulled this, atoning in every way the gods. Having reported the power of the gods on a stele, we praise the gods from now on.

Hardly any other text narrates so completely a sequence of events, from the original conflict to the praise of the gods, either directly referring or just alluding to the ritual actions with which the divine intervention in human conflicts was first provoked and then put to an end. Tatias had heard rumours that she had been giving a magical potion to her son-in-law and was, therefore, responsible for his insanity. In order to free herself from

³² Chaniotis 1997 and 2004a.

³³ Petzl 1994: no. 69, lines 3–34. Selection of commentaries: Zingerle 1926: 16–23; Versnel 2002: 64–5; Chaniotis 2004a: 11–3; Chaniotis 2004b: 245–6.

what she regarded as slander, she went to the local sanctuary and cursed her accusers ('she set up the sceptre and deposited imprecations'). Her curse had the function of an exculpatory oath: if she was guilty her unjustified curse would amount to perjury and would provoke divine punishment. The misfortunes that befell her and her son were in fact interpreted as such.

Tatias' ritual actions must have been performed in public. Under the pressure of a face-to-face society, Tatias defended her honour³⁴ by means of a public performance. She went to the most prominent public space of a small community, the temple, possibly on the day of a festival or upon previous announcement. The presence of an audience in this phase was as important as a form of social control as it was later for the manifestation of divine power.³⁵

The ceremony of imprecation consisted in the erection of a sceptre, the symbol of divine power. The sceptre is a common attribute of Mes in the reliefs that decorate the stelae,³⁶ and a new text explicitly designates a sceptre as that of Apollo Tarsios.³⁷ The erection of the sceptre was a public ceremony, presumably conducted by the priests, who are occasionally depicted on stelae holding or touching a sceptre.³⁸ During the ceremony, the case for which the sceptre was set up was mentioned, possibly in an invocation of the particular god who was expected to punish the culprit. We may infer this from the fact that several texts explicitly mention that the sceptre was erected in connection with a specific case or against a specific target.³⁹ This ritual is attested both in connection with the prevention of future crimes and with the divine prosecution of offences already committed, primarily by unknown culprits. One 'confession inscription', for example, refers to the erection of a sceptre to prevent thefts in a public bath.⁴⁰ A new text seems to imply that suspects of a crime or the parties

³⁴ Versnel 1991: 74, 80–1 and Versnel 1999; Chaniotis 2004b: 245–7 with further examples.

³⁵ Social control: Versnel 2002: 63–72. Witness to manifestation of divine power: Robert 1983: 522; Ameling 1985; Llewelyn 1998: 173–4; Chaniotis 2004b: 246–53 with examples.

³⁶ Petzl 1994: no. 58; cf. nos. 3, 51, 52, 61, 67. For the sceptre as symbol of the deity see also Corsten 2004.

³⁷ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 93–4, no. 66 (Tarsi, 144 CE).

³⁸ On the erection of the sceptre see Robert 1983: 518–20; Strubbe 1991: 44–5; Petzl 1994: 4 and 89–90; Strubbe 1997: 48; de Hoz 1999: 120; Chaniotis 2004a: 13; Gordon 2004a: 185–7. For representations of priests with a sceptre see Petzl 1994: 4 and nos. 10–12; Gordon 2004a: 186–7 and 191, fig. 9.

³⁹ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 93–4, no. 66: τοῦτου σκῆπτρον ἐφέστη Ἀπόλλωνος Ταρσίου; Petzl 1994: no. 35: ἐπέστησε τὸ σκῆπτρον τοῖς κακῶς εἰς αὐτοὺς τ[ολ]μήσασιν. See also the text in the following note.

⁴⁰ Petzl 1994: no. 3: ἐπεὶ ἐπεσάθῃ σκῆπτρον, εἴ τις ἐκ τοῦ βαλανείου τι κλέψῃ. For curses against potential thieves see, e.g., *IK* 60 (Kibyra) 379 with my improved reading in *SEG* LI 1432

to a conflict gave exculpatory oaths in the presence of the sceptre erected for that particular case ('for this matter, the sceptre of Apollon Tarsios was erected; however, no one confessed in its presence').⁴¹

The erection of the sceptre in public imprecation ceremonies is a ritual attested not only in the 'confession inscriptions' but also in a related group of texts, the funerary imprecations⁴² that invoked divine powers to protect the grave. In Saittai, for example, the mother and the brother of a deceased person 'made an imprecation in order that no one should harm the grave, because sceptres have been set up'.⁴³ It may be assumed that the sceptre was erected inside the sanctuary and that the ritual was performed by ritual experts, i.e. by the priests who received fees for the performance of the imprecations, exactly as they received fees for the administration of oaths.⁴⁴ An inscription from Bithynia in fact directly states that a priest consecrated a boundary stone (of a grave?) erected by a private person and set under the protection of the Sun.⁴⁵ The public performance of imprecations is widely attested, the imprecations of Teos being the earliest epigraphic attestation for the Greek world in the early fifth century BCE (c. 470).⁴⁶

The public imprecations informed the culprits that the gods had been invited to persecute them. The numerous propitiatory inscriptions set up as exemplum and proof (μαρτύριον, ἔξεμπλάριον)⁴⁷ of the effectiveness of this divine justice urged them to interpret the small and large problems that occurred in everyday life as punishment for their offence.

(Kibyra, second/third century): [μ]ηδένα {N} ἔρυν (sc. αἰρεῖν) [τὰ] σκεύη, δίχα θυσίας· εἰ δὲ μή, ἑαυτὸν ἐτίασετε (sc. αἰτιάσεται; 'no one should remove the receptacles, except for a sacrifice; otherwise he shall be cursed'). I suspect a similar curse in a rudely inscribed block in Amastris (Marek 1993: no. 116; cf. *EBGR* 1993–4: no. 153), which in my edition reads: ἡ ἀποκατέλξη (sc. ἀποκαθέλξη) ἡ ἄρη ἔνθεν αἰγίαν, ἀπολίψῃ τῇ γενεᾷ καὶ παρακαταθήκη·ν δίδωμι τῷ B..ρεταιῷ ('whoever draws down or takes away a goat's skin, let him and his descendants be destroyed. I have placed a pledge with B..retaios [i.e. a divinity]').

⁴¹ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 93–4 no. 66: περὶ τούτου σκήπτρον ἐφέστη Ἀπόλλωνος Ταρσίου· καὶ μηδενὸς ὠμολογήσαντος παρ' αὐτό.

⁴² On the funerary imprecations see Strubbe 1997. Cf. Chaniotis 2004a: 10, 29, 36, 40–1.

⁴³ *IAM* VI, 160 = Strubbe 1997: no. 62: καὶ ἐπηράσαντο μή τις αὐτοῦ τῷ μνημίῳ προσαμάρτη διὰ τὸ ἐπεστᾶσθαι σκήπτρα. See also *IAM* VI, 168 = Strubbe 1997: no. 53; *IAM* VI, 172 = Strubbe 1997: no. 61; *SEG* XXXIV 1231 = Strubbe 1997: no. 55.

⁴⁴ Chaniotis 2004a: 34–8. New evidence for fees: Herrmann and Malay 2007: 97–9, no. 70 (δαπανήσας) and 100–1, no. 72 (λυτρούμεθα).

⁴⁵ *SEG* XXXVII 1036 (second/third century CE): μαρτυρήσι Παντε[πό]πτης Ἥλιος· τὸν δὲ ὄρο[ν] κατειρώ[σε] Πηροβρης Ἀνδρέου, ἱερέυς.

⁴⁶ *SEG* XXXI 984–5; Santiago Alvarez 1990–1; van Effenterre and Ruzé 1994: no. 105.

⁴⁷ Ἐξεμπλάριον: Petzl 1994: nos. 106, 111, 112, 120, 121. Cf. Versnel 1991: 92 with n. 147 and 1999: 153 (for an attestation in Spain). Μαρτύριον: Petzl 1994: nos. 9 and 17; cf. the verb μαρτυρεῖν: Petzl 1994: nos. 8, 17, 68; ὑπόδειγμα τῶν ἄλλων: *SEG* XLVII 1751.

The numerous 'confession inscriptions' attest to the fact that this medium was often effective.

Besides the erection of a sceptre Tatias 'deposited curses in the temple'. Since Tatias was interested in demonstrating that the accusations against her were unjustified, I suspect that the deposition of curses took place during a ceremony – either in the presence of the cult personnel or of a larger audience. The same assumption can be made with regard to an inscription referring to another victim of slander. Hermogenes and Nitonis had made false accusations against a certain Artemidoros, who reacted by submitting a tablet (*pittakion*) to the sanctuary. Following events that were interpreted as divine punishment Hermogenes was forced to make the necessary atonements. From this it follows that Artemidoros had not acted in secret. He must have either submitted his *pittakion* to the priests or made it known in some other way.⁴⁸

Artemidoros' *pittakion* and Tatias' *arai* have a great affinity to a group of texts identified by H. S. Versnel as a sub-category of imprecations and characterised as 'judicial prayers' or 'prayers for justice'.⁴⁹ These texts usually – but not always – have the form of an imprecation, but they differ essentially from the ordinary curse tablets or *defixiones* because their authors not only wish their enemies harm and even death, but they also explain, often in a very emotional language, the reasons for cursing the person who has done them injustice or caused them pain.⁵⁰ One of the earliest examples is a curse from Oropos (third/second century).⁵¹ Someone cursed a series of persons, willing them to be delivered to Plouton and Mounogenes (Persephone), and wishing them death and misery. Unlike in ordinary *defixiones*, the cursor justified himself: 'I demand that my request be heard, because I have been wronged' (lines 15f.: [ἀδικο]ύμενος ἀξιῶ πάντα ἐπήκοα γενέσ[θαι]); 'having been wronged, and not having wronged first, I demand that what I have written down and deposited to you be accomplished' (lines 25–9: ἀξιῶ

⁴⁸ Petzl 1994: no. 60 (Silandos or Saittai). Chaniotis 2004a: 14 (with bibliography). For plausible arguments for the assumption that curses were sometimes known to their victims see Kiernan 2003 (with evidence from Britain). The bilingual curse in n. 151 was intended to be understood by Greek and Latin speakers and this also suggests at least a small audience.

⁴⁹ Versnel 1991: 68–75, 81–93; Versnel 1999: 127; Versnel 2002: 48–50. For further references see Chaniotis 2004a: 8–9; to these references add now Meyer and Smith 1994: nos. 89–90; Velázquez 2001; *EBGR* 1998: nos. 64 and 204; 1999: nos. 47 and 241; 2000: nos. 40 and 127; 2001: no. 29; *I.Leukopetra* 53. Graf 2001 urges against making a sharp distinction between curse and prayer, but there is a difference between curses in which a justification is given ('prayers for justice') and those *defixiones* which lack this feature; he suggests the term 'Vergeltungsgebete' (prayers for revenge). See also Jakov and Voutiras 2005: 129–30 ('Rachegebet').

⁵⁰ The best example is a curse from Amorgos, *IG XII* 7, p. 1.

⁵¹ *SEG XLVII* 510.

οὖν ἀδικούμενος καὶ οὐκ ἀδικῶν πρότερος ἐπιτελ[ῆ] γενέσθαι
 ἃ καταγράφω καὶ ἃ παρατίθεμαι ὑμῖν; cf. line 10: ἀξιῶ; line 45:
 ἀδικούμενος ὑπ' αὐτῶν).

'Prayers for justice' are found in a variety of forms and materials everywhere in the Roman Empire. Admittedly, no generalisations are permissible in this very complex field, but it is very likely that at least in some cases this form of appeal to divine justice took place in sanctuaries – i.e. in a ritual space – and involved if not such complex ritual actions as sacrifices, prayers, libations and offerings, at least the loud invocation of the gods and the recitation of the imprecation. Then the text was (ceremonially?) submitted to the cult personnel and may have been made publicly accessible (e.g. exposed on a wall or a board). Do we have any evidence that might support these assumptions?

The performance of rituals is indirectly attested through the representation of raised hands in relevant texts, in particular in funerary imprecations.⁵² The raising of both hands is a ritual gesture widely diffused in ancient iconography and in different contexts: invocations, prayers and imprecations.⁵³ The presence of a ritual gesture presupposes a ritual, whether in a sanctuary or – in the case of funerary imprecations – during the burial of the person whose premature, violent or inexplicable death was attributed to foul play. This is exemplified by a grave stele of a fifteen-year-old boy (Phazemonitis, 237 CE). It is decorated with two crossed hands and possibly a *masque du Soleil* and inscribed with an appeal to divine justice and revenge:⁵⁴ 'Lord the Almighty, you have made me, but an evil man has destroyed me. Avenge my death fast!' Although there can be no certainty in this matter, I think that the performative elements in this inscription support the assumption that the appeal to divine justice was a ritual action. In addition to the representation of a ritual gesture and to the invocation of the almighty god (whether pagan, Jewish or Christian)⁵⁵ which presupposes a loud acclamation, we may observe a remarkable rhetorical strategy applied by the author of the text in order to attract the god's personal interest in this affair. The author's persuasion strategy consists in the attempt to make the god a victim of the offender. As he presents the

⁵² Strubbe 1991: 42 with n. 93; Belayche 2007: 77.

⁵³ In connection with the invocation of a god: e.g. Perea and Montero 2000. In connection with magic: Nagy 2000. In connection with appeals for divine avenging of violent death: *I. Beroia* 210, 211, 240, 354, 388; Waelkens and Loots 2000: 127. In connection with prayer: Jakov and Voutiras 2005: 120–3.

⁵⁴ Marek 2000: 137–46 (*SEG* L 1233): Κύριε Παντοκράτωρ, σὺ μὲ ἐκτίσες, κακὸς δέ με ἄνθρωπος ἀπώλεσεν· ἐκδίκησόν με ἐν τάχῃ.

⁵⁵ On this ambiguity see Marek 2000: 146.

crime, it is not just the killing of a man by an evil person – the murderer is presented as someone who has destroyed the god's personal creation (σὺ μὲ ἔκτισες). Thus his punishment becomes the god's personal affair. The second element of the persuasion strategy consists in stressing the god's power (Κύριε Παντοκράτωρ). The god is invited in a subtle way to prove his endless power not only by punishing the murderer, but by inflicting the punishment fast (ἐν τάχῃ).⁵⁶ This is a strategy known from a related group of performative ritual texts: the magical texts. In order to provoke the anger of the gods and demons invoked in magic, the magician often applied a method described as *diabole*, i.e. he accused his opponent of offences against the divinity.⁵⁷ Magical texts regularly urge the divine powers to fulfil the magician's wish fast (ἦδη ἦδη, ταχύ ταχύ).⁵⁸ Given these rhetorical strategies, it is hard to imagine that the aforementioned and similar texts were only meant to be written and read in silence.⁵⁹

We observe exactly the same strategy in a 'prayer for justice' probably from Maionia:⁶⁰

I dedicate to you, Mother of the Gods, all the golden objects which I have lost; in order that she [the goddess] will investigate [the matter] and reveal everything, and in order that those who possess them will be punished in a manner worthy of her power, so that she [the goddess] will not look ridiculous.

The victim was probably a woman, who suffered not only the loss of gold objects, but also loss of face. In order to motivate the goddess to act, she transferred the loss of face upon the goddess, thus urging her to reveal her power.

This text is significant not only for its contents, but also for its form: it is written on a small bronze tablet (8 x 5 cm). M. Ricl has ingeniously recognised it as one of the *pittakia* mentioned in the 'confession inscriptions'.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Cf. Petzl 1994: no. 69, where the power of the god is shown by the fact that he punishes Tatias and her son within a day (μονημέρῳ κολάσει ἀπηλλάγη).

⁵⁷ For this strategy see Graf 1996: 163–6. A good example is *PGM* IV 2471–9.

⁵⁸ E.g. *PGM* I 262; II 83 and 98; IV 1924, 2037 and 2098; VII 330; XIV 11; *SEG* XLVI 1726 I. Cf. also *SEG* LIII 1763 line 154 and *IJudOr* II 70.

⁵⁹ Cf., e.g., a prayer for revenge in Dorylaion (early third century CE; *SEG* XLIV 1059). Helios and Tateis erected a stele, decorated with a representation of hands raised in prayer, on the grave of their slave who died a premature death. In the text 'they implore the testimony of Helios and all the gods, so that they avenge us'.

⁶⁰ *SEG* XXVIII 1568 (= *SEG* XL 1049): ἀνατίθημι Μητρί θεῶν χρυσὰ ἀπόλωσκα πάντα ὥστε ἀναζητῆσαι αὐτὴν καὶ ἐς μέσον ἐνεκκεῖν πάντα καὶ τοὺς ἔχοντες κολάσασθαι ἀξίως τῆς αὐτῆς δυνάμεως καὶ μήτε αὐτ[ὴν] καταγέλαστον ἔσεσθ[αι]. Commentaries: Ricl 1991; Versnel 1991: 74; Versnel 1999: 145–6; Versnel 2002: 55–6; Chaniotis 2004a: 14–5; Chaniotis 2004b: 247.

⁶¹ Ricl 1991.

It is tempting to assume that such prayers for justice were connected with a ritual cursing in a sanctuary.

We have already seen that the cursing of an opponent in a conflict fulfilled the same function as an exculpatory oath. Taking an oath is a ritual action that does not necessarily require the presence of priests, but in the small communities of Asia Minor both the administration of promissory and exculpatory oaths and the annulling of oaths must have been ritual actions performed by priests, especially when the aim of the oath was the settling of a dispute.⁶² A cult regulation from Laodikeia on the Lykos (second century CE) stipulates that a person who wanted to make another person take an oath (ὁ θέλων ὀρκ[ίζειν]) had to remain pure and offer a sacrifice.⁶³ These ritual actions took place in a sanctuary. When fees were paid to sanctuaries for the annulling of oaths, this implies the active participation of the cult personnel.⁶⁴ For example, in a dispute concerning some sheep, one of the opponents was instructed (by a court, the priests, an oracle or an arbitrator) to support his claims by taking an oath.⁶⁵ Perjury was expected to provoke divine wrath, and if this sin is most commonly mentioned in the 'confession inscriptions' this is certainly connected with the fact that exculpatory oaths were taken in sanctuaries. One of the relevant inscriptions preserves the command of the god: 'he commands not to take an oath or make others take an oath or administer an oath in an unjust way [or for an unjust cause]'.⁶⁶

CESSION OF DISPUTED PROPERTY TO THE GODS

The abovementioned *pittakion* (from Maionia?) attests the cession of the lost or stolen property to the Mother of Gods. In this way the god became a victim of the theft and was forced to punish the culprit. This procedure

⁶² See, e.g., the honorary decree for the priest Leon of Panamara (*SEG* XLV 1557): 'Leon... who served as a priest at Panamara in a pious and benevolent way, behaved towards all our citizens who came to the sanctuary in a way which demonstrated his concern with honour, and continually reconciled those who had disputes with regard to oaths (τοὺς διαφορο[μ]ένους ὑπὲρ τῶν ὀρκῶν συλλύων διετέλει).' Cf. Chaniotis 2004a: 30–4 with further examples. For a different interpretation see van Bremen 2004: 212 (the oaths refer to an agreement between communities participating in the cult at Panamara).

⁶³ *IK* 49 (Laodikeia/Lykos) 64 = *MAMA* VI 1 = *LSAM* 88.

⁶⁴ Fees: see above n. 44; very clear in Petzl 1994: no. 58: ὁ λύων σκῆπτρον θῆσει ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερὸν δηνάρια ἑκατὸν ἑβδομήκοντα πέντε. For the part played by oaths in the 'confession inscriptions' see especially Petzl 1994: nos. 54 and 58.

⁶⁵ Petzl 1994: no. 34 (Ayazvıran, third century CE): ἐκρίθη ὁμόσε τὸν Ἑρμογένην μὴ προδεδωκένε τὰ πρόβατα τὰ Καείκου; cf. Zingerle 1926: 33–5; Chaniotis 1997: 367; Chaniotis 2004a: 33.

⁶⁶ Petzl 1994: no. 27: [παραγέλλων ἀ]δίκως μὴ ὀμνεῖν τινα μήτε ὀρκίζ[ειν] μήτε ὀρκωμάτων γίνεσθαι. For a spell against perjury see Meyer and Smith 1994: no. 92.

is known from many texts, from Asia Minor to Britain, that record the permanent transmission of property claims from a mortal to a divinity. In a dedication from Kula (176 CE) a woman who had been cheated during a transaction reports:⁶⁷ 'I have bought [---], but having been treated disdainfully, I have "ceded" (ἐξέχωρησα) them to Mes Axiotenos, so that he can do with them as he pleases.' The 'consecrated' item – lost, disputed or stolen property – probably remained sacred property and the victim was satisfied with the pleasure of revenge. Did the cession of property take place in a formal procedure? Did it involve speech acts? Are we dealing with a ritual?

To find an answer we have to leave Asia Minor and consider the evidence from a Macedonian sanctuary. The sanctuary of the Mother of Gods in Leukopetra (near Beroia) has preserved large groups of inscriptions that record the donation of slaves to the goddess. These texts have misleadingly been designated as 'sacred manumissions'. In reality, the dedicated people were not set free, but became property of the goddess, i.e. of the sanctuary, to which the property titles were formally transferred.⁶⁸ There is no doubt that the donation involved formal actions: perhaps sacrifices, certainly the submission of the relevant legal documents and public announcements – most probably during the day of the festival (see note 27). One of the texts is of seminal importance in our context. It records the donation of a lost female slave by a man, who requested the goddess to look for her and, in case of success, to keep her.⁶⁹ Exactly as in the case of the abovementioned *pittakion*, this inscription records the cession of lost property to a divinity. Since it does not differ from the other records in the sanctuary of Leukopetra in any way, we may be certain that here the cession was a formal legal and ritual act performed in the sanctuary and subsequently inscribed there.⁷⁰

One should hesitate to use evidence from a sanctuary in Macedonia to explain practices in Asia Minor. But in the case of Leukopetra (and some other cult places in Macedonia) such remarkable similarity in certain ritual practices with those attested in Asia Minor, and in particular in Phrygia (cf. below), has been observed that with all due caution we may assume that the cession of lost or disputed property to a divinity involved ritual actions in both areas. This should not be surprising: cession is a

⁶⁷ Malay 1994: 70 no. 171; Versnel 2002: 53–4, n. 59.

⁶⁸ Riel 2001. Cf. my comments in *SEG L* 597.

⁶⁹ *I. Leukopetra* 53: ἐχαριστόμην κοράσιον ὀνόματι Συνφέρουσιν... τὸ κὲ ἀπούλων τὸ αὐτὴ ἀτῆ ἀναζητήσεις.

⁷⁰ See my remarks in *EBGR* 2000: no. 155.

form of dedication, hence a sanctuary is the proper setting and a ritual the proper procedure. This supports the assumption that it was a ceremonial act performed in sanctuaries and recorded by the priests.

This is in fact directly attested in a text, unfortunately not found in Asia Minor, but in Spain. It is a lead tablet from Saguntum (second century CE) inscribed with a Latin 'prayer for justice'.⁷¹ A slave (Chryse), who was the victim of theft by another slave, invoked Iao and donated to him the stolen money (*rogat et a Iau dat pecunia quae a me accepit Heracla*), expecting the god to punish the thief by afflicting his eyes and his chest and making all his powers/abilities useless (*ut insttetur uius senus, o[c]elus et [v]ires quicumqui sunt aride*). The most important piece of information in this text is the fact that the *defigens* promised a reward to a cult functionary for his services (*do pecuniam onori sacricola*). A reward for the cult personnel makes sense only if the cult personnel was involved in the ritualised cession of the stolen property – perhaps also in the cursing.⁷²

RITUALS OF DIVINATION TO DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF DIVINE WRATH

Divination is used by humans in desperate situations. The stories alluded to in the 'confession inscriptions' concern persons in despair, afflicted by misfortune, accidents and illness, disappointed in their hopes, helpless in their conflicts with family members, neighbours and business associates. These are the problems alluded to in all sorts of texts pertaining to the communication between immortals and humans. Many of the oracular enquiries of the classical period in Dodona request Zeus to reveal a culprit.⁷³ In his accusation against Alexander of Abonouteichos for his false oracles, Lucian (*Alex.* 44) narrates the story of a Paphlagonian, who had lost his son. He had travelled to Alexandria for studies, but never returned. The father's suspicions fell upon the slaves who had accompanied the young man to Egypt. Following Alexander's advice, probably given in the form of an oracle as the context suggests, the man accused the slaves of murder and the governor of Galatia condemned them to death. It was only after their execution that the missing son returned – it turned out that he had travelled to India.

⁷¹ Corell 2000.

⁷² Cf. the 'prayer for justice' of Kollyra (Sicily, third century): *IGrSic. et inf. It.* 25 with the comments of Versnel 1991: 73. Kollyra dedicated to a sanctuary and its priests not only stolen objects but also the fine (i.e. the payment of twelve times their value). For fees paid to the sanctuaries in Anatolia see above nn. 44 and 64.

⁷³ E.g. *SEG* XV 385; XLIX 639 and 644.

Alexander's sanctuary at Abonouteichos did not monopolise the visits of persons looking for answers to everyday problems and conflicts. Sometimes the priests, as mediators between men and gods, could offer solutions: cure, conflict resolution and pressure upon the unjust. In many cases they could persuade their clients that their misfortune was the punishment for an offence committed either by them or by a relative. Presumably after the priests had won some clues about possible misdemeanours through discussions with their clients it was not difficult to determine the offence that had caused the anger of the gods. This was occasionally communicated to the worshippers in the form of an oracle. Luckily, here we do have direct evidence. In one of the 'confession inscriptions' the delinquent reports: 'I suffered punishment because I was not ready and I received the following oracular response: "because you are impure".'⁷⁴

There is a great variety of methods of divination in Asia Minor, and the 'confession inscriptions' are not very informative in this regard. In addition to the verbs κληδονίζω (note 74), ἐπικρίνω⁷⁵ and μαντεύομαι,⁷⁶ we find references to dreams that may have been interpreted by priests.⁷⁷ One of the best-known texts, but also the most enigmatic, may provide evidence for the transmission of oracular responses of the gods to the sinners by the priests. It is the record of the confessions of a certain Theodoros, a sacred slave at Silandos (235 CE).⁷⁸ Theodoros had repeatedly violated the

⁷⁴ Petzl 1994: no. 98 (Buldan, second century CE): κολασθεῖς διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔτοιμον εἶνε κὲ κεκληδονίσθε με ὅτι μεμολυμένος εἶ'. G. Petzl gives a slightly different text: κολασθεῖς, διὰ τὸ με ἔτοιμον εἶνε. The sin (impurity) shows that the man was not ready for a ritual, consequently the reading διὰ τὸ με ἔτοιμον εἶνε ('because I was ready') makes little sense. Another oracle in no. 36: 'she polluted my platform [probably a podium for statues]' (καταιμόλυνέ μου τὸ βῆμα); for βῆμα see SEG LII 1627. See a new attestation in Herrmann and Malay 2007: 80–1, no. 54 (μὴ φοβοῦ).

⁷⁵ Petzl 1994: no. 58, l. 20; for its meaning 'to answer an oracular request', cf. *P.Tebt.* II 284, 2–3.

⁷⁶ SEG XLVII 1651 (ἑμὰν]τεύσατο).

⁷⁷ Gordon 2004a: 189. In general, on the communication between worshippers and gods in Lydia, see de Hoz 1999: 120–4.

⁷⁸ Petzl 1994: no. 5, lines 2–26: 'Κατὰ τὸ ἐφρευθεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν, ὑπὸ τοῦ Διὸς κὲ τοῦ (Μηνὸς) μεγάλου Ἀρτεμιδώρου.' — 'Ἐκολασόμην τὰ ὅματα τὸν Θεόδωρον κατὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας, ὥς ἐπύσεν.' — 'Συνεγενόμην τῇ πεδίσχη τῷ Ἀπλοκόμα, τῇ Τροφίμῃ, τῇ γυναικὶ τῇ Εὐτύχηδος εἰς τὸ πλετώρην.' — 'Ἀπαίρι τὴν πρώτην ἀμαρτίαν προβάτω {ν}, πέρδεικι, ἀσφάλαι. Δευτέρα ἀμαρτία. Ἀλλὰ δοῦλος ὢν τῶν θεῶν τῶν ἐν Νονοῦ συνεγενόμην τῇ Ἀριάγνῃ τῇ μοναυλῖα.' — 'παίρι χύρῳ, θείνῳ, ἐχθύει. Τῇ τρίτῃ ἀμαρτία συνεγενόμην Ἀρεθόσῃ μοναυλῖα.' — 'παίρι ὄρνειθι, στρουθῷ, περιστερᾷ, κύ(πρω) κρειθοπύρων, πρό(χω) οἶνου, κύ(πρω) πυρῶν καθαρὸς τοῖς εἱεροῖς, πρό(χω) ἄ.' — 'Ἔσχα παράκλητον τὸν Δεῖαν.' — 'Εἶδαι, κατὰ τὰ πηήματα πεπηρώκην'. Νῦν δὲ εἰλαζόμενο αὐτοῦ τοὺς θεοὺς κὲ στηλογραφοῦντος ἀνερύσεται τὰς ἀμαρτίας. Ἡρωτημαῖος ὑπὸ τῆς συνικλήτου· εἴλεος εἶμαι ἀναστανομένης τῆς στήλλης μου, ἥ ἡμέρα ὥρισ. Ἀνύξαις τὴν φυλακὴν, ἐξαφίω τὸν κατάδικον διὰ ἐνιαυτοῦ κὲ μηνῶν ἰ' περιπατούντων'. Commentaries: Malay 1988: 151–2;

obligation of sexual abstinence. When his sight was afflicted, he sought advice in the sanctuary. What happened there is recorded in a text that resembles a protocol of utterances, very similar to the text analysed at the beginning of this article. The text begins with a statement of Theodoros, who explains that he had set up this inscription after he had received guidance by two gods, Zeus and Mes, and a quotation from a god who justified Theodoros' punishment. Since Zeus is described later in the text as Theodoros' supporter, the punishing god must be Mes. Three confessions of Theodoros follow,⁷⁹ alternating with instructions for the removal of the sins. These instructions were given as oracular responses of the gods or as priestly instructions or as quotations from a sacred regulation.⁸⁰ Finally, Theodoros reports that he had received 'legal' assistance from Zeus, upon which Mes was entreated by the council of the gods (*synkletos*)⁸¹ and decided to forgive Theodoros. G. Petzl has suggested that Theodoros was convicted and kept in jail after a trial in which the god was impersonated by a priest.⁸² The idea of a trial in the sanctuary should be rejected and the word φυλακή seems to be used metaphorically.⁸³ A new text (see below) identifies the council as that of the gods, presumably the Dodekathēon of the Anatolian Twelve Gods worshipped together with Mes (see above note 29). The trial took place in Heaven. In fact, a new dedication from Hamidiye (102 CE) with a praise of Mes designates the god as 'an infallible judge in heaven' (κριτῆς ἀλάθητος ἐν οὐρανῷ).⁸⁴

Theod.: 'For I have been brought by the gods to my senses, by Zeus and the Great Mes Artemidorou.'

Mes: 'I have punished Theodoros on his eyes for his offences.'

Theod.: 'I had sexual intercourse with Trophime, the slave of Haplokomas, the wife of Eutythis, in the *praetorium*.'

He takes the first sin away with a sheep, a partridge, a mole.

Second sin.

Theod.: 'While I was a slave of the gods of Nonnos, I had sexual intercourse with the flutist Ariagne.'

He takes away with a 'piglet', a tuna, [another] fish.

Theod.: 'On my third sin I had sexual intercourse with the flutist Aretousa.'

Petzl 1988; Varinlioglu 1989: 37–40; Petzl 1994: 8–11 (with German translation); Rid 1995a: 72–3; Chaniotis 1997: 357–60; Chaniotis 2004a: 27–30.

⁷⁹ Multiple confessions also in Petzl 1994: nos. 73–4 (two inscriptions set up on the same day by the same person); Herrmann and Malay 2007: 110–3, no. 84.

⁸⁰ A quotation from a *lex sacra* in Petzl 1994: no. 58.

⁸¹ For the meaning of *synkletos* in this text see the text in n. 86.

⁸² Petzl 1988: 163–5 and 1994: 10–11.

⁸³ Varinlioglu 1989: 37–9; Rid 1995a: 72–3; Chaniotis 2004a: 28–9.

⁸⁴ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 75–6, no. 51.

He takes away with a chicken, a sparrow, a pigeon. A kypros of barley and wheat, a prochus of wine, a kypros of clean [?] wheat for the priests, one prochus.

Theod.: 'I asked for Zeus's assistance.'

Mes: 'See! I have blinded him for his sins. But, since he has appeased the gods and has erected the stele, he has taken his sins away. Asked by the council [I respond that] I am kindly disposed, if [or when] he sets up my stele, on the day I have ordered. You may open the prison. I set the convict free after one year and ten months.'

Evidence for 'sacred theatre' in sanctuaries⁸⁵ makes it very likely that a priest spoke the words attributed to the god. The scene described in this text must have taken place in a sanctuary or a temple, in front of the images of the divinities. There is no point in speculating about how the divine words were transmitted, but Lucian's description of the practices in the temple of Glykon Neos Asklepios in Abonouteichos gives us an idea (*Alex.* 26). A new text from Kollyda (205 CE) provides more evidence for the enquiries concerning the cause of divine anger and the subsequent confessions and propitiations:⁸⁶

In the year 290, in the month Peritios. Ammianos and Hermogenes, sons of Tryphon, appear [at the sanctuary] asking the gods Men Motyllites and Zeus Sabazios and Artemis Anaitis and the great senate and the council of the gods, asking also the village and the sacred *doumos*, that they may find mercy. For they have been punished because they seized their father, while he was acknowledging the powers of the gods. And their father did not obtain pity. But after his death, they wrote [?] on account of his first written declaration 'nobody at any time should disparage the gods',⁸⁷ and dedicated [the stele] praising the gods.

Despite the syncopated representation of the events – common in these texts – Peter Herrmann and Hasan Malay have recognised the background of this case. Tryphon was about to make a confession of a sin, probably after having been punished by the gods, but was held back by his sons. His reconciliation with the gods was denied to him.

⁸⁵ E.g., Merkelbach 1995: 172–3, 178–81.

⁸⁶ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 113–6 no. 85: 'Ετους σθ, μηνὸς Περιτίου. Ἀμμιανὸς καὶ Ἑρμογένης Τρύφωνος παρίσιν ἐρωτῶντες τοὺς θεοὺς Μῆνα Μοτυλλίτην καὶ Δία Σαβάζιον καὶ Ἀρτεμιν Ἀναίτιν καὶ μεγάλην συνάτος καὶ σύγκλητον τῶν θεῶν, ἐρωτῶντες τὴν κατοικίαν καὶ τὸν ἱερὸν δοῦμον, ἵνα ἐλέου τύχωσιν. Ἐπὶ ἐκολάσθη[σ]αν οὗτοι, ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐκράτησαν ἐξομολογούμενον τὰς δυνάμεις τῶν θεῶν. Καὶ ἐλημοσύνην μὴ λαβόντος τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ ἀποτελεσθέντος αὐτοῦ 'μή τις ποτε παρευτελίσαι τοὺς θεοὺς' διὰ τὰς π[ρ]ώτας προγραφὰς αὐτοῦ ἔγραψ[αν] καὶ ἀνέθηκαν εὐλογοῦντε[ς] τοῖς θεοῖς.

⁸⁷ The phrase 'μή τις ποτε παρευτελίσαι τοὺς θεοὺς' is more probably the father's written declaration, adopted by the sons, rather than a divine command.

After he died (perhaps killed by an animal, as one may infer from the fragmentary relief on the stele), his sons became the victims of divine anger, until they were forced to appear at the sanctuary, confess the sin and set up a stele in which they quoted a written statement of their father. A few details are significant in our context. The sinners appeared in the sanctuary in order to make an enquiry as to how they could put an end to divine punishment. Their question was addressed – as in the case of Theodoros – to three particular gods and to a council of gods. But in addition to this enquiry, the two brothers also asked their village (*katoikia*) and a religious association (*hieros doumos*) for advice in this matter. The editors assume that the sinners appealed to some leading persons or to one of the authorities of the village. This is indeed possible, but the fact that this enquiry is mentioned in the stele dedicated in the sanctuary implies that this was a single procedure and that the enquiry of Ammianos and Hermogenes took place in the sanctuary in the presence of the village – local authorities and the population – and of the cult association.⁸⁸

Once the oracular responses had given a hint about the possible cause of the divine wrath, the worshipper could identify the misdemeanour either by himself, by interrogating relatives or through discussions with the priests.⁸⁹ If not, he could still atone for ‘known and *unknown* sins’.⁹⁰ Oracular responses did not only identify the possible offence, but also gave instructions about its removal, the subject to which I now turn.

RITUALS OF ATONEMENT I: PUBLIC CONFESSION

The atonement consisted of various types of ritual actions that included both ‘internal’ and ‘external’ demonstrations of faith: public confessions and exaltations of the power of gods went hand in hand with morally neutral acts of worship (purifications, offerings, the erection of an inscription). All the rituals of atonement (ἰλάσκομαι/ἐξιλάσκομαι)⁹¹ were performed in public. The belief in the effectiveness of ‘divine justice’

⁸⁸ A *hieros doumos* was responsible for the transmission of a divine command in TAM VI, 536 (Maionia, 171 CE).

⁸⁹ Chaniotis 2004a: 22–30. Excuses for the offences in the ‘confession inscriptions’ reflect such discussions. Cf. Gordon 2004a: 192–3.

⁹⁰ For the expression ἐξ εἰδότην καὶ μὴ εἰδότην see Petzl 1994: 60f. and nos. 38, 51, and 53; cf. Riel 1995a: 68; Klauck 1996: 74.

⁹¹ Petzl 1994: nos. 5, 6, 33, 39, 45, 47, 54, 60, 68–70, 73, 74, 80, 39, 112 (ἐξομολογήσα[το] καὶ εἰλάθη) and 123; SEG XLVII 1654; de Hoz 1999: 119.

relied entirely upon the narratives of its implementation and upon the rituals that aimed to appease the gods. The confessions of those who had disregarded divine power, the vows of the pious and the praise of the gods were oral performances. As soon as they were inscribed they became the visible proof of divine power. The confession of Syntyche best demonstrates the interest of the gods, i.e. of the priests, in making the alleged divine intervention public.⁹² When a semiprecious stone disappeared from her home, Syntyche made a vow. Mes Axiottenos heard her prayer and revealed the thief. However, Syntyche yielded to the pleas of the thief's mother and decided to conceal the whole story. By profiting from the intervention of the god without offering the promised reward, namely to inform others about his epiphany by making a thanksgiving dedication, she ultimately subverted divine justice and the belief in gods. So, when her thirteen-year-old son became sick (or died) and Syntyche sought assistance in the sanctuary, the priests instructed her to confess the story publicly and write it down in an inscription for others to read and not to dare disregard the god's power.

Although the verb ἐξομολογέομαι is not used very often in the relevant texts,⁹³ the contents of the 'confession inscriptions' are confessions, accompanied with praise. The three confessions of Theodoros in Silandos (above note 78) and the confessions of the two brothers at Kollyda (above note 86) do not use any of these verbs, but confessions they are. A new text from Kollyda (imperial period) offers a further example:⁹⁴ 'Great are Meter Anaeitis and Mes Tiamou and Mes Ouranios, who rule over Kollyda, and [great is] their power! Tryphaina, the slave of Babylonia, entered (the sanctuary?) unsuitably (εἰσῆλθεν ἄθετος) and was punished and confessed --(καὶ ἐκολάσθη καὶ ἐξομολογή[σ---]).'

In the Greco-Roman world, 'confession inscriptions' are limited to Lydia and Phrygia.⁹⁵ The 'confession inscriptions' of South Arabia probably developed independently.⁹⁶ Despite the lack of inscriptions comparable to

⁹² Petzl 1994: no. 59. Commentaries on this intriguing (and controversial) text: Petzl and Malay 1987: 465–72; Chaniotis 1990: 128–31; Petzl 1994: 75–6; Chaniotis 1997: 368–9, n. 85; Gordon 2004a: 192.

⁹³ Petzl 1994: nos. 3, 43, 109, III, 112, 116; cf. ὁμολογῶ: Petzl 1994: nos. 68, 100, 106; cf. Herrmann and Malay 2007: 93–4, no. 66. This leads Rostad 2002: 162, to the exaggerated conclusion: 'the basic elements of the reconciliation would be sacrifices, ritual cleanings and dedications of inscriptions, not confession'. Belayche 2007: 81–6 correctly points to the importance of confession as demonstration of faith.

⁹⁴ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 110, no. 83. An alternative to ἄθετος (adjective) is ἀθέτος (for ἀθέτως). Clearly a confession also in Petzl 1994: nos. 100 (ὁμολογῶ τ[ὸ ἀμάρτημα] Ἀμητ[ῆ] Ἀξιο[ττηνῶ] καὶ στη[λογο]ρ[αφῶ]) and 106.

⁹⁵ Petzl 1994: vii; Gordon 2004a: 179–80.

⁹⁶ Sima 1999 and below p. 146.

the Lydian and Phrygian ‘confession inscriptions’, public confessions of sins are occasionally attested through other kinds of sources in other areas as well. One of the healing miracles in Epidauros (written on stone in the mid-fourth century) contains the earliest confession of sins in Greek literature:⁹⁷

The fishmonger Amphimnastos. While bringing fish into Arcadia, this man swore that he would give a tenth of the profit from the fish to Asklepios, but he didn't do it, as he should have done. When he was in the market place in Tegea, suddenly the fish were struck by lightning and their bodies were burning up. With a big crowd standing around this spectacle, Amphimnastos confessed the whole deception that he had done connected with Asklepios, and when he had earnestly prayed to the god, the fish appeared to live again, and Amphimnastos dedicated the tenth part to Asklepios.

Amphimnastos confessed his sin publicly and asked for forgiveness, thus testifying to the power of the god. Similar public confessions of sins are known from literary sources in connection with the Egyptian cults.⁹⁸ The authors of the Knidian ‘prayers for justice’⁹⁹ referred the persons who had done them injustice to Demeter, asking her to inflict pain for as long as it took to make them come to the sanctuary and confess their crime.¹⁰⁰ In all these cases the confession was perceived as a medium that demonstrated the power of the god. In some cases, one observes a change from the first to the third person singular in the inscribed records of the confession: ‘for although the gods of the Perkenoi [and] Zeus Oreites announced that it is forbidden to bring animals for pasture in the grove, and they disobeyed, they punished the son of Eumenes, grandson of Eumenes, and put him in a godlike state. But *my* Fortune gave me hope. Great are the Nemeseis in Perkon.’¹⁰¹ This switch has been plausibly attributed to the editing of the texts by the priests.¹⁰² But I have the impression that when the confession is given in the first person singular – as the verbatim quotation of the sinner's recognition of sin – it functions as a speech act that was aimed at terminating the divine punishment.

⁹⁷ LiDonnici 1995: 121. ⁹⁸ *Ov. Pont.* 1.1.51–8; *Juven. Sat.* 6.532–41.

⁹⁹ *IK* 41 (Knidos) 147–59; see Versnel 1994, 1999: 152–3 and 2002: 50–4.

¹⁰⁰ The same idea is expressed in a Christian curse from Alexandria Troas; *IK* 53 (Alexandreia/Troas) 188 lines 7–8: ποίησον αὐτοὺς πρὸ σοῦ βήματος μολῖν, ἑαυτοὺς ἐσθίουσας καὶ τέκνα καὶ γυνέκας; M. Riel, ad loc., has pointed to the similarity of this text to the confession inscriptions and to the Knidian curses.

¹⁰¹ Petzl 1994: no. 7; cf. Petzl 1994: no. 5 and 37; Herrmann and Malay 2007: nos. 55 and 84.

¹⁰² Gordon 2004a: 183, n. 27.

RITUALS OF ATONEMENT II:

'EXTERNAL' ACTS OF ATONEMENT (*TRIPHONON*, *ENNEAPHONON*)

Violations of purity regulations are quite common among the offences mentioned in the 'confession inscriptions'.¹⁰³ Clean body and clean clothes, abstinence from certain types of food, and from sexual intercourse were required for the performance of rituals, and despite the wide diffusion of the idea that a pure mind was equally important, the priests of the Anatolian sanctuaries were preoccupied with the observance of the traditional purity regulations. They had good reasons. A ritual action itself may be morally indifferent, but its performance makes clear that a person accepts the customary norms and asserts his belief in the power of the gods and in the rules his community has agreed upon. It was not the content of the ritual that counted, but the fact that a person was willing to perform it, not the physical act, but the attitude. And exactly this was what the gods punished: the disbelief in their power which any neglect of their commands expressed. If the divine punishment of illness and death was accepted for seemingly unimportant sins, such as wearing an unclean garment, it was because the gods could not tolerate their will being ignored.

The preoccupation with ritual purity explains why propitiation of the gods consisted not only in the public confession of the sin and begging for forgiveness, but also in the performance of rituals. The expression *ἱεροποιήμα*¹⁰⁴ refers to rituals in a more general manner, and a text refers to the relevant expiatory rituals as sacrifices and purifications:¹⁰⁵ 'with purifications and sacrifices I propitiated the lord so that he may save my body'. The *hieropoïema* also comprised food offerings (grain and wine).¹⁰⁶ A stele from the territory of Saittai represents a woman placing an offering (fruit?) on an altar, supervised by a priest who holds a wreath.¹⁰⁷

Only one of these rituals is described in the texts: the *triphonon* or *enneaphonon*. The *triphonon*, i.e. a triad of animals, is mentioned in a text from Lydia (238 CE): 'he took away [the sin] with a *triphonon*, with a mole and a sparrow and a tuna'.¹⁰⁸ The confession of Theodoros (above pp. 131–3)

¹⁰³ Petzl 1994: nos. 1 and 123 (eating impure food), 6, 19, 36, 43, 55, 72, 107, 112, 115, 116, 120 (entering a sanctuary in a state of impurity or with unclean clothes). New examples: Herrmann and Malay 2007: 70–1 no. 46 and 110, no. 83.

¹⁰⁴ Petzl 1994: no. 70: ποιήσαντες τὸ ἱεροποίημα; no. 73: ἐπεζήτησεν ἱερο[π]ήμα; cf. no. 74: ἐπεζήτησεν ἱεροποίημα. This term is also attested in dedications: *TAM* V1, 320–2.

¹⁰⁵ Petzl 1994: no. 123: καθαρμοῖς κὲ θυσίαις ἐξίλασάμην τὸν κῆρυον, ἵνα μὴ τὸ ἐμὸν σῶ[μα] σῶ[σι].

¹⁰⁶ Petzl 1994: 13 and nos. 6 and 8; Herrmann and Malay 2007: 97–9, no. 70 (wheat, wine and oil).

¹⁰⁷ Gordon 2004a: 184 and 191, fig. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Petzl 1994: no. 6: τριφώνῳ ἀπήρεν, ἀσφάλακι κὲ στρουθῷ κὲ θυνίῳ Cf. Petzl 1994: no. 55: ἦρε τριφώνον; Herrmann and Malay 2007: 80–1, no. 54: ἦραν τριφώνα.

does not use any of these terms, but it presents a description of the ritual. The removal of the sin is expressed with the formula 'he takes away with' followed by three triads of animals, first, a sheep, a partridge and a mole, then three kinds of fish, and finally three birds (chicken, sparrow and pigeon).¹⁰⁹ A triad of animals is a *tri-phonon*; three triads of animals obviously constitute an *ennea-phonon*, a term that is now attested in a new text from Silandos (180 CE):¹¹⁰ 'also the preceding removal [of the sin] by means of an enneaphonon has taken place'. The *triphonon* and the *enneaphonon* are hitherto unknown outside Lydia. It seems to be a specific, local ritual expressed with Greek terms. But the number of the animals (three and three times three) corresponds to widespread ideas about the mystical significance of these numbers. A new inscription from Yehilova (imperial period) describes the following fine for the violation of a funerary foundation:¹¹¹ 'he will pay as a fine nine incorrupt girls, nine boys, nine white bulls with golden horns, nine cows, nine horses with golden bridles, nine white he-goats, nine she-goats, nine rams with golden fleece and nine white swallows to the goddess in Komana every year'. The fine consists of nine offerings, each of them again comprising nine items. In the case of the *triphonon/enneaphonon*, the triads of animals probably represent elements, such as the earth, the sky, the underworld and water. The object of the verb 'to take away' is explicitly stated: it is the sin. The ritual transmission of the sin to animals recalls scapegoat rituals, but also finds parallels in Hittite rituals.¹¹² Such rituals included the release of animals (birds, fish, mice) to remove evils and sins, followed by incantations. Survival of such traditional rituals through the centuries in the local sanctuaries, rather than an artificial revival, seems the most likely explanation. A good parallel is offered by inscriptions from Tralleis (second/third century CE) that mention the otherwise unattested ritual service of the *pallake* (concubine) and the *aniptopodes* (those who do not wash their feet). We might be inclined to regard these cult peculiarities as revivals if the inscriptions in honour of two women who fulfilled these services did not state that these functions were transmitted within their family (ἐκ προγόνων παλλακίδων καὶ ἀνιπτοπόδων, ἀπὸ γένους τῶν παλλακίδων).¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Chaniotis 1995: 333–4; my interpretation of Theodoros' ritual as concerning three triads of animals (rejected by Petzl 1997: 75) is now confirmed through the discovery of an inscription that mentions an *enneaphonon*. See the next note.

¹¹⁰ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 97–9, no. 70: ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ ἡ προάπαρσις ἐξ ἐννεαφώνου.

¹¹¹ Aydah 2002 (*SEG* LII 1464 ter). See Debord 2005 and *EBGR* 2002: no. 6.

¹¹² Varinlioglu 1989. ¹¹³ *IK* 36 (Tralleis) 6–7. See the analysis of Budin 2003.

RITUALS OF ATONEMENT III:

ACCLAMATIONS AND PUBLIC PRAISE OF THE GODS

Many 'confession inscriptions' begin or end with an acclamation, e.g. 'Great are the Nemeseis in Perkon!'; 'Great is Zeus from the Twin Oaks, who (i.e. whose statue) has been established in a sanctuary, and great are his powers'; 'Great is the Mother who gave birth to Mes; great is Mes Ouranios; great is Mes [established by] Artemidoros, who rules over Axiotta, and his power.'¹¹⁴ The formulation 'and from now on I/we praise the god' is so stereotypically used that one has the impression that it is a speech act concluding the conflict between mortal and god.¹¹⁵ Even when the praise is not explicitly stated, it can still be indirectly inferred. One inscription, for example, refers to the erection of a stele by the alumnae of a sinner: 'His alumnae Asiaticke and Iouliane set up [the stone] and express their thanks' (ἀνέστησαν αἱ αὐτοῦ τεθραμμέναι Ἀσιατικὴ καὶ Ἰουλιανὴ εὐχαριστοῦσαι).¹¹⁶ The expression of thanks presupposes an oral performance.

Both the acclamation at the beginning and the reference to the continual praise reflect rituals performed in the sanctuaries and occasionally depicted in the reliefs that decorated the stelae. Worshippers are represented standing, with their right hand raised;¹¹⁷ in one case, a man touches or holds the sceptre of the god,¹¹⁸ in another a woman brings her right hand to the breast in a gesture of adoration;¹¹⁹ another woman is represented falling on her knees, probably in front of the statues of the gods.¹²⁰ The best example is the new praise from Lydia, discussed at the beginning of this article:

Great is the Mother of Mes Axiottenos . . .

Great is your holiness! Great is your justice! Great is your victory! Great your punishing power! Great is the Dodektheon that has been established in your vicinity! . . .

Now, great is Mes, the ruler over Axiotta! You have given me satisfaction. I praise you.

Acclamations are loud oral performances that are in theory addressed to the god – notice here the second person – but primarily intended to

¹¹⁴ Petzl 1994: nos. 7, 9 and 55, respectively; cf. nos. 10–11. Belayche 2008.

¹¹⁵ Petzl 1994: nos. 20, 33, 34, 37, 44, 62, 64, 69; Herrmann and Malay 2007: 81–2, no. 55; καὶ ἀπὸ νῦν εὐλογώ; cf. Petzl 1994: no. 54; καὶ νῦν εἰλασασμένη εὐλογεῖ; Petzl 1994: no. 101: ἀπὸ νῦν εὐλογεῖ μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων πάντων. Cf. Petzl 1994: no. 97: εὐλογῶ τὰς δυνάμεις.

¹¹⁶ Petzl 1994: no. 4. ¹¹⁷ Petzl 1994: nos. 6, 7, 10–12, 20 (= Gordon 2004a: 185 and 182, fig. 3), 37, 38.

¹¹⁸ Petzl 1994: no. 6; cf. Gordon 2004a: 185 with fig. 5. For the touching of a sacred object as a sign of purity see the regulation of a cult association in Philadelphiea (Sokolowski 1955: no. 20). The regulation obliged the members to assert ritual purity by taking an oath during which they touched with their hand the stone inscription with the sacred regulation.

¹¹⁹ Petzl 1994: no. 57. ¹²⁰ Petzl 1994: no. 38. For this gesture see van Straten 1974.

impress an audience of mortals assembled in the sanctuary. The presence of an audience is a recurring feature in narratives of epiphanies, e.g. in the healing miracles of Asklepios.¹²¹ An interesting example is an inscription from Phrygia (Midaion or Akkilaion), which M. Ricl has recognised as a confession inscription.¹²² A woman seems to have been asked by the divinity (ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) to offer sacrificial animals (ἐπιζητηθεῖσα ἱερεῖα).¹²³ When the woman remained disobedient despite the repetition of the request, she was punished in such a way that she became an example for all the people (lines 9–13: μετὰ πολλῆς ἀνάγκης κὲ βασάνων ἔκλυτο ὑπόδειγμα τῶν ἄλλων ἰς τὸν τόπον). After the propitiation and in fulfilment of the vow she had made in order that the punishment might stop, she erected the stone together with her daughter, for herself and for her family. M. Ricl associated the following phrase κὲ συνερχομένου λαοῦ with the invocation ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ ('as the people came together, let this be to everyone's good'), interpreting this as an allusion to a public confession in front of an audience. There is an alternative to this reading: ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῆς κὲ τῶν ἰδίων πάντων κὲ συνερχομένου λαοῦ ('for herself, for all her family, and for the people who come together', i.e. frequent the sanctuary),¹²⁴ but this would not change the fact that the sinner refers to worshippers who come to the sanctuary. The presence of an audience may be alluded to in a stele from Saittai. Under the representation of a priest and the sinner who makes an offering one sees the representation of a man and a woman in the gesture of adoration (raised right hand), who may represent the villagers assembled at the temple to praise the god.¹²⁵

RITUALS OF ATONEMENT IV:

ERECTION OF THE STELE (ΣΤΗΛΟΓΡΑΦΕΙΝ)

The oral praise of the gods was a very effective but nevertheless ephemeral means of attracting the attention of the pilgrims to the divine power. The erection of a stele (στηλογραφεῖν)¹²⁶ made the ephemeral ritual into a perpetual exemplum (ἔξεμπλάριον)¹²⁷ for others. No manifestation of

¹²¹ E.g. *IGUR* I 148, line 5 (δήμου παρεστῶτος); LiDonnici 1995: 121 (ὄχλου πολλοῦ περιστάντος). Cf. Robert 1983: 522.

¹²² Ricl 1997 (*SEG* XLVII 1751 = *CIG* 4142).

¹²³ Ricl 1997 reads ἐπιζητηθεῖσα ἱερεῖα (i.e. the woman was asked to become a priestess), but I prefer the reading ἱερεῖα suggested by G. Petzl (*apud* Ricl).

¹²⁴ Suggested by me in *EBGR* 1997: no. 318. Cf. H. V. Pleket (*SEG* XLVII 1751): 'for herself and all of her family and the convening congregation'.

¹²⁵ Robert 1983: 522; cf. Gordon 2004a: 184 and 191, fig. 8.

¹²⁶ Petzl 1994: nos. 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 19, 21, 33, 35, 37, 39, 47, 55, 57, 58, 62, 69, 71, 96, 100, 109, 115, 117. Cf. Petzl 1994: no. 70: ποιήσαντες τὸ ἱεροπῆμα... ἐνγραφὸν ἔστησαν.

¹²⁷ Petzl 1994: no. 111: ἔξει τῇ[ν] στήλην ἔξονπλάριον; cf. nos. 106, 112, 120, 121. See also n. 47.

divine power counts if there are no persons to testify to it. The very word for manifestation of divine power (*epiphaneia*) underlines the visibility of the miracle. The gods expect the mortals who have experienced their power, both the euergetic and the destructive, to tell others about it, to write hymns and aretalogies, to set up inscriptions with narratives for others to read.¹²⁸ The healing miracles of Asklepios in Epidauros (fourth century BCE), Crete (second century BCE), Pergamon and Rome (second and third century CE), the aretalogies of Isis found throughout the Mediterranean, the epigraphic narratives of the miracles of Zeus Panamaros in Stratonikeia (see note 19) and of Apollo in Tlos,¹²⁹ but also the countless dedications made in fulfilment of a vow, are expressions of the same idea.

The erection of the stele with the record of the epiphany¹³⁰ was not just an administrative act, but a ritual demanded by the god in order to put an end to his conflict with the mortals – or as a substitute for another ritual, e.g. the sacrifice of a bull.¹³¹ In the confession inscriptions of Theodoros, the text concludes with the words spoken by a god (Mes?): ‘See! I have blinded him for his sins. But, since he has appeased the gods and has erected the stele, he has taken his sins away. Asked by the council [I respond that] I am kindly disposed, *if* [or *when*] *he sets up my stele, on the day I have ordered*. You may open the prison. I set the convict free after one year and ten months.’ The god had determined a specific day for the erection of the stele, making it a condition for the propitiation. This presupposes a ceremonial dedication upon an earlier announcement (cf. ‘*on the day I have ordered*’). The mention of dates in many confession inscriptions (e.g. ‘he set up the testimony in the 276th year on the 30th day of the month Daisios’)¹³² may originate in the fact that the date had

¹²⁸ E.g. Petzl 1994: no. 11: ἀπητήθην στήλῃν; no. 57: ἐκέλευσεν στηλογραφηθῆναι νέμεσιν.

¹²⁹ Chaniotis 1988: 75–85; Merkelbach 2000.

¹³⁰ Petzl 1994: no. 11: καὶ ἀνέγραψα τὰς δυνάμεις τοῦ θεοῦ. ¹³¹ Petzl 1994: no. 61.

¹³² Petzl 2004: no. 9. Other dates (if not otherwise stated, references are to Petzl 1994): 12 Dios (no. 101; Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 46); 12 Apellaios (no. 95; Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 54); 30 Apellaios (no. 67); 12 Aoudnaios (nos. 24, 64 and 77); 18 Aoudnaios (no. 11); 8 Peritios (no. 35); 12 Peritios (no. 76); 18 Peritios (no. 12; SEG XLVII 1654); 15 Dystros (Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 72); 30 Dystros (nos. 6, 9); 12 Xandikos (no. 22); 15 Xandikos (no. 54); 2 Artemisios (nos. 73 and 74); 6 Artemisios (no. 57); 8 Artemisios (Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 70); 20 Artemisios (no. 41); 12 Daisios (Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 51); 20 Daisios (Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 84); 30 Daisios (Malay and Sayar 2004); 2 Panemos (no. 69); 10 Panemos (no. 61); 12 Panemos (nos. 5, 55, 58); 18 Panemos (no. 10); 30 Loos (no. 72); 18 Gorpiaios (no. 83). In some cases only the name of the month, not the day, is given: (Apellaios: no. 71; Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 71; Aoudnaios: no. 16; Peritios: nos. 36 and 44; Herrmann and Malay 2007: no. 85; Xandikos: no. 19, 70; Daisios: nos. 18, 40; Panemos: nos. 46, 78 and 80; Hyperberetaios: no. 63); the eighth day of an unknown month in no. 39, the eleventh day of a month in no. 66.

been determined by the god and the record of the date confirmed that his wish had been fulfilled.¹³³

The erection of the stele was an act of dedication accompanied by ritual actions, such as the offering of a bloodless sacrifice explicitly mentioned in a text from Lydia.¹³⁴ If we take a text that states 'I erected a stele for the Mother of Gods while I was praising your powers' (ἀνέστησα Μητρὶ θεῶν στήλην ἐὺλογῶν σου τὰς δυνάμεις) at face value, the acclamations and praise accompanied the erection of the stele.¹³⁵ In addition to the praise, the penitent sinners loudly instructed (παραγγέλλω) the audience present at the ceremony not to underestimate the power of the gods.¹³⁶ A 'confession inscription' of a woman who had been raped (?) by a certain Agathemeros reveals the close connection of the erection of the stele (ἐστηλογράφησεν) and the pronouncement of instructions (παραγγέλλων): 'for he has set up a stele, instructing (the others) not to neglect the god' (ἐπὶ ὃ κ' ἐὺ ἐστηλογράφησεν παραγέλων μηδένα καταφρονεῖν τοῦ θεοῦ ?)].¹³⁷

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: BETWEEN LOCAL PARTICULARITIES AND GENERAL TRENDS

The confession inscriptions defined boundaries: as exempla, they defined moral and religious boundaries. They defined the norms that had to be followed by humans if they wanted to live in harmony with the gods. Their narratives of punishment showed the worshippers the torments that the transgressors of the moral and religious boundaries had to expect. The glorification of the power of *local* gods, addressed with local epithets,¹³⁸

¹³³ Gordon 2004a: 184 regards the calendar dates as a narrative device, a guarantor of verisimilitude.

¹³⁴ Petzl 1994: no. 6: 'he made the amendment (θυμολυσία) which the gods demand according to the custom, when the stele was being erected: a modius of grain and a prochus of wine'.

¹³⁵ Petzl 1994: no. 97. Cf. no. 36: εὐλογοῦντες ἀποδεῖδομεν; Herrmann and Malay 2007: 110–3 no. 84: εὐλογῶν ἀνέθηκα.

¹³⁶ Παραγγέλλω followed by instructions is found in many texts (Petzl 1994: nos. 9, 10, 27, 106, 107, 110, 112, 117, 120, 123). In an earlier article (Chaniotis 2004a: 43 with n. 149) I assumed that the subject of παραγγέλλω is the god, i.e. that these texts are oracular pronouncements (unequivocal, e.g. in Petzl 1994: nos. 9 and 120). Indeed, in some cases παραγγέλλω is used in reference to commands of the god (e.g. Petzl 1994: no. 106: παραγγείλας μοι τοῦ θεοῦ). But when the verb is used in the context of the dedication of the stele, the subject of the verb is the worshipper (unequivocal, e.g. in Petzl 1994: no. 123: παραγγέλλω μηθένα ἱερὸν ἄθυτον αἰγοτόμιον ἔσθαι, ἐπεὶ παθίτε τὰς ἐμὰς [εμας] κολάσεις; cf. Petzl 1994: no. 10).

¹³⁷ Petzl 1994: no. 117. Very similar structure in Petzl 1994: no. 27 (ἀνέστησεν] τὴν στήλην ἰς τὸν θεόν [παραγγέλλων...]).

¹³⁸ E.g. Meter Tazene (Petzl 1994: no. 41); Meter Tal[...].rdene (no. 42); Zeus Bozenos (no. 43); Zeus Peizenos (no. 45); Zeus Ogmenos (no. 53). Cf. Belayche 2006a.

defined the boundaries of local religious communities – sometimes surrounded by enemies. A new confession inscription from Kolyda (second century CE), for example, reports how during the celebration of a festival a mob, armed with swords, sticks and stones, marched against a sanctuary, attacked the sacred slaves and smashed the statues of the gods.¹³⁹

The stereotypical character of the ‘confession inscriptions’ obliges us to view them as the cultural product of a particular period and region. They are expressions of local religiosity. Their many very specific features show that they are connected with local traditions and that it would be a mistake to disregard their heterogeneity. Yet a purely endoscopic analysis cannot reveal all their aspects. These texts were not written in areas isolated from the rest of the Roman world. Their form, their vocabulary, their rituals, their content, reveal complex processes of assimilation and cultural transfer. By expressing ideas deeply rooted in Anatolian ritual practices using the Greek language, by assimilating the sacred buildings of the local gods with the secular buildings of Roman administration,¹⁴⁰ by applying the terminology of Greek and Roman law¹⁴¹ and by giving the indigenous gods the names of Greek divinities, these texts crossed boundaries and invite us to do the same in their examination and to cross textual, geographical, chronological and conceptual boundaries in an effort to place the confession inscriptions in a wider context.

In more general terms, the ‘confession inscriptions’ are one of the many expressions of the belief in divine justice, like the funerary imprecations, the prayers for justice or the aretalogies. The Roman world was a world of increased mobility, and the movement of individual persons or larger groups contributed to the transfer of such ideas. When a Phrygian died at Dyrrhachion in Epirus, the funerary imprecation written on his grave used a typical formula known from his country: ‘the violator should lose his own children in foreign lands’.¹⁴² When a senator from Perge founded a sanctuary at Panoias in Portugal, he wrote part of the ritual prescriptions in Greek.¹⁴³ The ritual prescriptions for the cult of Mes in Athens were brought by immigrants.¹⁴⁴ The Jews in Asia Minor used a particular vocabulary in their praise of God, which is reflected in the ‘confession

¹³⁹ Herrmann and Malay 2007: 110–3, no. 84.

¹⁴⁰ Basilica: Herrmann and Malay 2007: 110–3, no. 84; *praetorium*: Petzl 1994: no. 5; *senatus*: Herrmann and Malay 2007: 113–6, no. 85.

¹⁴¹ Chaniotis 1997: 382–4. To the examples collected there, add now Herrmann and Malay 2007: 97–9, no. 70 (χωρίς δόλου ποινηρού, i.e. *sine dolo malo*).

¹⁴² *I.Épidamne* 58: εἰ δέ τις ἡμέτερον τύμβον σ(τ)ήλην τε θελήσῃ σκῦλαι ἐν ἀλλοδαπῇ τοῖα τέκη καθῖδοι.

¹⁴³ Alföldy 1997. ¹⁴⁴ *LSCG* 1969: no. 55; Lane 1971: 9–10; Horsley 1983: no. 6.

inscriptions'. The verb *hypsōo*, for example, is known in the meaning *hymnoo* and *doxazo* (praise, glorify) primarily in the Septuagint (e.g. Exod. 15:2, 2 Esdr. 19:5, Ps. 144:1, Dan. 3:51), and a Jewish influence has already been suggested for this verb as well as for *eulogeo* and for the mention of angels.¹⁴⁵ H. V. Pleket¹⁴⁶ has observed that a confession inscription in Phrygia (see above note 122) uses the term *laos* – the *terminus technicus* for the Jewish community – as a designation for the worshippers who frequented a sanctuary. *Dynamis* and *arete*, two words that often appear in the 'confession inscriptions' and related texts, are often attested in the hymns and praises of mystery cults.¹⁴⁷ It is reasonable to assume that to some extent the vocabulary of the 'confession inscriptions' was influenced both by the Jewish communities in these areas¹⁴⁸ and by the dissemination of mystery cults and their vocabulary. Direct transfer of ideas can most likely explain the convergence of mentality that has been observed in the 'confession inscriptions' and in New Testament and patristic sources.¹⁴⁹ Finally, the relation of some confession inscriptions with prayers of justice can be plausibly explained through the movement of populations and through the wide diffusion of magical practices and of the relevant handbooks.¹⁵⁰ The demand for an immediate response of the divinity (ἐν τᾷ χεῖ) in 'prayers of justice' (see above note 58) recalls similar expressions in magical texts. A curse tablet in Spain addressed against victims from the Greek east (Time and Nikias), and written in both Greek and Latin, may be related to the movement of ideas as a result of the movement of populations and with the adaptation of formulas in a new bilingual or multilingual environment. The *defigens* wishes for the death of his victim or victims, making sure to state that the curse was justified.¹⁵¹ The curse tablets from Britain that demonstrate a striking similarity in

¹⁴⁵ Robert 1964: 28–30; Pleket 1981: 183–9; Mitchell 1993: II, 36. Angels in the 'confession inscriptions': Petzl 1994: nos. 3 and 38; Petzl 1998a: 13; de Hoz 1999: 122.

¹⁴⁶ Commentary on SEG XLVII 1751. For *laos* see also *IJdOr* II 26 and 44.

¹⁴⁷ *Dynamis* in confession inscriptions: Petzl 1994: nos. 3, 9, 10, 11, 14, 33–5, 37, 39, 47, 54, 55, 59, 62, 65, 68, 69, 79, 97; Herrmann and Malay 2007: nos. 51, 55, 56, 66; in related texts: SEG XXVIII 1568; cf. Belayche 2005: 40 and 44. *Arete*: Petzl 1994: no. 50. On these terms see van Straten 1976: 16; Pleket 1981: 157; de Hoz 1999: 123.

¹⁴⁸ For the Jewish communities in Asia Minor see Trebilco 1991; *IJdOr* II.

¹⁴⁹ E.g. Frisch 1983; Ameling 1985; Klauck 1996; Llewelyn 1998: 173–5.

¹⁵⁰ For the wide dissemination of magical handbooks that contributed to the diffusion of the relevant language see Faraone 2000; Jordan 2001a and 2001b; Velázquez 2001.

¹⁵¹ Curbera, Sierra Delage and Velázquez 1999 (SEG XLIX 1405, first century BCE or CE): ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ κα[ι] ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐμῶν τοῖς κατὰ Ἀθῆναι διδωμι, παραδίδωμι Νεικίαν καὶ Τεμῆν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους οἷς δικαίως κατήρασαμην. Side B: *pro me pro meis devotos defixos inferis devotos defixos inferis, Timen et Nici[am] et ceteros quos merito devovi sup[ra] [a] pro me pro mei[s] Timen Nician Nicia[n].*

content, mentality and (to some extent) vocabulary with analogous texts from Asia Minor remind us that, despite the particular features of the Anatolian texts, the ideas concerning divine justice circulated widely in the ancient Mediterranean.

The analogies between 'confession inscriptions' and other texts are the result of ritual transfer, but also of the interaction (and competition) between religious groups in the imperial period. In some cases such a transfer of expressions, rituals and ideas required the initiative of an individual (for example, of Alexander of Abonou Teichos)¹⁵² and in other cases it was a slow process of acculturation.

But in some cases we are dealing with similarities that can be explained as responses to similar religious needs and experiences. We encounter an appeal to a god to punish an adulteress in the grave epigram for a young man who was murdered by his wife's secret lover at Alexandria/Troas,¹⁵³ but also in the curse of Sabinus, a Christian.¹⁵⁴ The loud public performances in the Asklepieion in Rome (see p. 140) and in the Anatolian sanctuaries stem from a widespread religious mentality: they are manifestations of the fact that humans have experienced the presence and the efficacy of divine power. Although the public confession of sins has deep roots in the Eastern religions, whereas in Greece it is a very peripheral phenomenon,¹⁵⁵ we need not assume oriental influence in order to explain, for example, the public recognition of error in one of the 'healing miracles' of Asklepios in Epidauros (above p. 136). The hope that a culprit will be forced by God to confess his sin publicly is found – earlier than the earliest Anatolian 'confession inscription' – in the Knidian texts (second century BCE) and much later, in the fifth century CE, the author of a Christian curse written in a church in Alexandria Troas invoked the Immaculate Cross to make thieves come to the church, 'eating themselves, their wives and their children' (see above note 100). M. Riel has aptly remarked the similarity of this text to the 'confession inscriptions' and to the Knidian curses, but can we really tell whether this similarity is the result of direct or indirect influence, although cultural exchange seems a very plausible assumption? A much earlier inscription from Jerusalem (third/second century BCE) seems to contain a confession of Ares, a flautist, who led soldiers to a sanctuary, was engaged in a fight

¹⁵² For the cult foundation of Alexander as a paradigm of ritual transfer in the context of religious competition see Chaniotis 2002 (with bibliography).

¹⁵³ *IK* 53 (Alexandria/Troas) 90. ¹⁵⁴ Björck 1938.

¹⁵⁵ For the relevant testimonia see the seminal study of Pettazzoni 1936: 54–115; cf. Steinleitner 1913; Pettazzoni 1954: 57–9. For Greece see above p. 136.

with the priests, and was subsequently punished by the gods.¹⁵⁶ The text is introduced with the word ὄρκος ('oath'), which M. Ricl takes to be a heading summarising the case narrated in the inscription ('the case of the oath'). Since there is no reference to an oath in the – admittedly very fragmentary – text, it seems to me more likely that the text *is* a narrative given under oath by Ares. In either case, the text is very closely related to the 'confession inscriptions'.

As already mentioned, 'confession inscriptions' are also known in South Arabia. As a matter of fact they bear striking similarities to the 'confession inscriptions' of Lydia and Phrygia.¹⁵⁷ These similarities can be seen in the perception of illness as a punishment for a sin which needs to be confessed, in the role of oracles and dreams for the communication between angry gods and sinners, in the nature of the offences (violation of regulations on purity, violation of the borders of sanctuaries, entering the temple in a state of impurity, adultery, neglect of ritual obligations) and in the confession of known and unknown sins. Perjury is a common offence in Asia Minor, but absent in the 'confession inscriptions' of South Arabia. The most striking similarity between the texts of the two areas is the demand placed upon the sinner to write his offence on a stele. Such publicity aimed at demonstrating the power of the god and provided an opportunity to praise him. The practice of setting up 'confession inscriptions' possibly developed independently in Asia Minor and in South Arabia, but corresponds to the same need: the public manifestation of divine punishment was the best medium to prevent criminal acts, or at least to offer some comfort to the victims.

But beyond the transfer of ideas and the similarities that may be explained by general patterns of behaviour practices, we should also consider the possibility of survivals. We have already seen that there is a similarity between Hittite rituals and rituals that are attested in the 'confession inscriptions'.¹⁵⁸ More intriguing, but also more puzzling, is the similarity between practices in Phrygia and in Macedonia, in particular in the sanctuary of the goddess Meter Theon in Leukopetra. Here, the consecration of slaves and free persons was practised in a manner that very much resembles the practices in the sanctuary of Apollon Lairbenos

¹⁵⁶ Ricl 2006 (on *SEG* XXX 1695; LIII 1852). Cf. the text mentioned in n. 139.

¹⁵⁷ For the following remarks see the analysis by Sima 1999. See also Kropp 2002 and Graf and Zwettler 2004. D. Graf has informed me that an unpublished South Arabian confession inscription uses the formula 'knew and did not know', which bears a striking similarity to the formula 'known and unknown sins' (see note 90).

¹⁵⁸ See above n. 112 and Ricl 1995a: 68, on Hittite confession letters.

in Phrygia.¹⁵⁹ One of the texts inscribed among the dedications of slaves in the sanctuary strongly resembles a propitiation inscription, both in content and in vocabulary.¹⁶⁰

We, Aurelius Lysimachos and Aurelia Nikopolis, inhabitants of the village Douraioi in the region of the Elimiotai, return (ἀποδίδομεν, i.e. pay as a fine) a slave by the name of Agrione, twenty years old, after we had suffered many torments from the autochthonous Mother of the Gods.

Exactly as in the Anatolian documents of divine justice, here also two persons attributed the mischief of everyday life to the wrath of the local goddess, who was appeased through the dedication of the slave. Significantly, the verb used to express the dedication of the slave (ἀποδίδωμι, 'return, repay') is the verb we find in the same context in the 'confession inscriptions'.¹⁶¹ The dedication of slaves after divine punishment ('being harassed by the goddess') is attested in a second inscription from Leukopetra.¹⁶² Another inscription in Macedonia (Pelagonia, 200 CE) reflects the same idea using a similar vocabulary. An anonymous woman dedicated a female slave and her descendants to Artemis Kynagos 'after having been harassed by Artemis Ephesia, the one in Kolobaise'.¹⁶³ The analogies between the religious practices in Macedonia and in Phrygia do not end here. Exactly as in Phrygia, prayers of justice and the cession of disputed property to a divinity are also attested in Leukopetra. A man dedicated a lost slave requesting the goddess to look for him for herself.¹⁶⁴ Are we dealing here with a transfer of ideas due to the increased mobility of the imperial period or with the survival of practices in two areas with a Brygian/Phrygian substratum¹⁶⁵ or with the adoption of practices with a long tradition in Anatolia by the Macedonian rural population because of an affinity in religious mentality? It is wise to leave these questions unanswered, but by asking them we at least sharpen our eyes to detect more evidence that may contribute to an answer. The hope that more stelae will be found in

¹⁵⁹ For the analysis of the legal aspects see Mirkovic 1997 and Riel 2001.

¹⁶⁰ *I.Leukopetra* 65 (214 CE): ...πολλὰ διὰ κακὰ πάσχοντες ἀπὸ Μητρὸς Θεῶν Αὐτόχθονος ἀποδίδομεν πεδίσκην. See my comment in *EBGR* 1999: no. 181 and 2000: no. 155.

¹⁶¹ Petzl 1994: no. 8, 17, 18, 28, 36, 46, 63, 71, 73–74.

¹⁶² *I.Leukopetra* 35: ὀχλούμενος ὑπὸ τῆς θε[ο]ῦ.

¹⁶³ *IG X* 2.2, 233: ἐνωχλημέν[η] ὑπὸ Ἀρτέμιδος Ἐφεσίας [τῆς] ἐν Κολοβαίσι. See my comment in *EBGR* 1999: no. 181.

¹⁶⁴ *I.Leukopetra* 53: ἐχαρισόμην κοράσιον...ἀπούλωλον...τὸ αὐτὴ ἀπὴ ἀναζητήσεις. The similarity with the Anatolian practices was recognised independently by Riel 2001: 150 and me (see my comments in *EBGR* 2000: no. 155).

¹⁶⁵ For the very controversial subject of a Brygian substratum in Macedonia see the bibliography in *SEG* XLVI 704; XLVIII 865; XLIX 659.

excavated sanctuaries than in the Swiss antiquities market is not entirely vain and the experience of the past two decades has shown that every new text adds yet another stone in a fascinating mosaic.

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*Continuity of Nabataean law in the Petra papyri: a methodological exercise**

Hannah M. Cotton

What do we know of Nabataean law? Or, rather, what are our sources for Nabataean law?¹

Although some legal customs can be inferred and gleaned from literary sources about the Nabataeans,² most, if not all, the evidence derives from documentary texts, inscriptions and papyri, written in the Nabataean script in Nabataean Aramaic (and as will become clear later on, also in Greek). This documentary evidence, to use John Healey's phrase, 'is not "supported"', so to speak, by the survival of any contemporary or later *literature* in Nabataean'.³ 'Unsupported' is indeed an understatement: in contrast to Roman or Jewish law for example, a vacuum exists outside the documents whose testimony cannot be enhanced, modified, explained or nuanced by a body of literary legal tradition. In this Nabataean shares the fate of several other Near Eastern Semitic languages represented by epigraphic documents alone. On the other hand, the Nabataean legal document in the Nabataean script is part of the 'Aramaic common law tradition',⁴ and its formulae and provisions can be profitably compared and contrasted with sibling documents.⁵ My aim in the present exercise, however, is *not* to detect identity,

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¹ See the pioneering study of Healey 1993; see also Healey 2005.

² They are now collected, with a translation and a commentary in Hackl, Jenni, and Schneider *Quellen*: 415–620.

³ Healey 2005: 129 (original italics); the observation cited is not restricted to legal texts, but, with some notable exceptions, describes the predicament of Semitic epigraphy in general.

⁴ For the concept see Muffs 1969: especially 173–94.

⁵ See the incisive comparison of the formulae in Jewish and Nabataean legal documents in Levine 2000, pointing out the presence of repetitious clusters of legal terms meant to create an impression of all-inclusiveness; in the former 'this is achieved by stringing along Hebrew or Aramaic terms of reference', whereas the scribes of the Nabataean documents use 'Arabic equivalents of the Aramaic terms of reference' (844–5). Cf. Koenen 2001: 734–5 on the 'traditional technique of accumulating words and formulas'.

similarity and continuity of formulae,⁶ not even 'to identify the diversity existing within commonality' of 'heirs to a rich Aramaic tradition',⁷ but rather to isolate pieces of substantive Nabataean law, more precisely the Nabataean law of persons.⁸ Paradoxically as it may seem at first sight, my task was rendered easier by the fact that I rely on documents written mostly in Greek rather than in Nabataean Aramaic.

Most of the texts written in Nabataean Aramaic predate the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom and its redaction into a Roman province in 106 CE. Our earliest sources are the tomb inscriptions, especially those from Mada'in Salih.⁹ The realisation that they are legal texts, rather than epitaphs or warnings against interference with the tombs, came soon after their discovery in the last quarter of the nineteenth century:¹⁰ this is to be inferred, *inter alia*, from the fact that a copy was deposited in the temple of a god, as we read in one of the inscriptions (H 36, l. 9: *nsḥt dnh yhyb [bb]yt qyʿ*), but even more by the explicit reference to a legal document, *šṭr mwbbt*, a deed of gift, in the hand of the beneficiary, to be used as her legal claim, *dy bydh dy t'bd bh kl dy tšb* (H 27, l. 4).¹¹ The last dated tomb inscription is from 74/5 CE.

Our second category of sources are the papyri in Nabataean cursive found in Nahal Hever¹² in two archives, deposited there by refugees from the province of Arabia during the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–6 CE).¹³ These papyri contain the longest legal texts in Nabataean Aramaic. The dates of these Nabataean contracts from Nahal Hever fall between 60 and 122. Eight documents have so far been published: *P. Yadin* 1–4, 6 and 9 which belong to the Babatha archive,¹⁴ and two, *P. Hever* 1 and 2, out of five

⁶ See the careful and exhaustive running commentary on the individual Nabataean documents in Yadin, Greenfield, Yardeni and Levine *Documents*.

⁷ The phrasing comes from Levine 2000: 851.

⁸ I am aware of only one systematic treatment of Nabataean law of persons on tomb inscriptions, namely Shiffman 1964, which is mentioned only in Greenfield 1974: 66, n. 13 – *Russica non leguntur*. I am indebted to my friend Alexander Jakobson for its translation. I have not seen Al-Fassi 2007 in its published version.

⁹ Introduced, edited and translated with a commentary in Healey *Tomb Inscriptions*: 65–236 = H(ege)ra 1–38; for the other sites see Healey *Tomb Inscriptions*: 237–48.

¹⁰ For a survey of the research down to 1974 see Greenfield 1974: 64–6. For a succinct summary of their salient legal aspects see Healey 2005: 136–8.

¹¹ Cf. also 'documents of consecration', *bšṭry ḥrmy*, in the Wadi at-Turkmaniye inscription, *CIS II* 530, l. 4 = Healey *Tomb Inscriptions*, 238–42; cf. Hackl, Jenni and Schneider *Quellen*: 259: 'Weihungsurkunden'.

¹² On the nomenclature of documentary texts from the Judaean Desert see Cotton 2001; see also Cotton in Schiffman and VanderKam 2000: s.v. 'Documentary Texts', 'Nahal Hever', 'Nahal Se'elim'.

¹³ See Yadin *Bar-Kokhba*; Eshel and Amit 1998.

¹⁴ Yadin, Greenfield, Yardeni and Levine *Documents*.

or six which probably belong to the archive of Salome Komaise.¹⁵ Six of those documents are from the royal period – only four of them with precise dates: *P. Hever* 1 (60 CE) and *P. Hever* 2; *P. Yadin* 1 (94 CE), *P. Yadin* 2–3 (both 99 CE), and *P. Yadin* 4; and two are from the Roman period: *P. Yadin* 6 (119 CE) and *P. Yadin* 9 (122 CE). The still unpublished *P. Hever* 3–5 may belong to either period.¹⁶

As indicated above, I am interested in isolating elements of substantive Nabataean law. However, a step forward in vindicating the distinctiveness of the Nabataean legal tradition has already been made in the study of its diplomatics. Ada Yardeni's new edition of the earliest Nabataean double document, *P. Hever* 1 (60 CE), is a veritable landmark.¹⁷ Yardeni pointed out for the first time a phenomenon which, so far as I know, had never been observed before, whose implication is that there existed a unique and independent Nabataean tradition of writing double documents, unparalleled elsewhere, attested in *P. Hever* 1 and *P. Yadin* 2 and 3, all three from the royal period, and continuing into the Roman period, as exemplified in *P. Yadin* 7, a Jewish Aramaic document from 120 CE.¹⁸

I can do no better here than summarise her argument. What we see in these documents is that the inner (or upper) text starts already on the verso, towards its bottom. Then the papyrus was turned over, foot to head, rather than merely being turned sideways from back to front. This is in fact the only way to keep both parts of the inner text (the beginning on the verso and its continuation on the recto), on the same part of the papyrus so that both could later be rolled and tied. The purpose of this complicated arrangement was to prevent tampering with the contents of the inner text. Nothing could be added since the writing on the verso reached the very bottom of the papyrus before it was turned over.¹⁹

¹⁵ However they were not published in Cotton and Yardeni 1997 with the rest of the papyri which belong to this archive; as a result, *DJD* XXVII starts with no. 7. *P. Hever* 1 (= *P. Yadin* 36) was first published by Starcky 1954, and revised by Yardeni 2001; for a preliminary publication of *P. Hever* 2 see Yardeni *Textbook*: I, 290–1 (see II, 95 for English translation) with important observations in Eshel 2002. On Nahal Hever as the provenance of the archive of Salome Komaise as well, see Cotton and Yardeni 1997: 1–4.

¹⁶ Or rather 3–6 as, although they have been known since 1953, the fragments have to this day not been properly sorted out, see de Vaux 1953.

¹⁷ Yardeni 2001; cf. Cotton 2003b: 37–8.

¹⁸ Meyer 2007: 65 misjudges the fragmentary condition of the papyri; contrary to what she says, there is no sign of a shortening of the inner text in the Nabataean double document, but every reason to believe that the tradition was vibrant and tenacious.

¹⁹ This contrasts sharply with the cavalier treatment of the inner text in many of the Greek texts in the archives from Nahal Hever and from Dura-Europos, see Lewis 1989: 9; cf. *P. Hever* 62 and *P. Dura* 26, 28, 29. Yiftach 2008 offers a radical revision of the common explanation for the demise of the double document in Egypt.

No further legal documents written in Nabataean Aramaic after *P. Yadin* 9 of 122 CE have come to view. However, there are virtually no legal documents in any script or language from the area of Syria Palaestina and Arabia²⁰ after 135/6 and until the sixth century CE.²¹ a gap of 380 years separates the latest legal document in the Babatha archive, *P. Yadin* 27 of 132 CE, from the first safely dated legal contract from Nessana, *P. Nessana* 16 of 512; and over 400 years separate it from *P. Petra* 1, of 537 CE, published in the first volume of the Petra Papyri.²² Both *P. Petra* 1 and *P. Nessana* 16, like most of the papyri in the corpora to which they belong, are written in Greek.²³ However, the peculiar circumstances responsible for the preservation of the Nabataean papyri, namely the flight of Jews from Arabia to the caves of Nahal Hever, would make it quite unsafe to say that by that date the Nabataean Aramaic contract was ousted altogether by the Greek contract. All that can be said with confidence is 1. that we know of no Nabataean contracts after 122 CE and 2. that Greek is likely to have remained the language of legal documents from 106 down to the sixth and seventh centuries in the territories which once belonged to Nabataea/Arabia.

Not everyone agrees. The late Naphtali Lewis, whose swift and authoritative publication of the Greek part of the Babatha archive in 1989 marks a new era in the study of Jewish life and law under Roman rule,²⁴ believed in the demise of the Aramaic legal document, both Jewish and Nabataean, whose fate he compares to that of the Demotic contract in Egypt, where 'the Roman reorganization of the administration . . . denied such documents the recognition or status they had previously enjoyed'.²⁵ Of course there was no policy of suppression of the native languages. But they were starved out of existence: 'the "natives" were generally free to continue their customs and practices so long as these did not conflict with governmental requirements. In the eastern provinces that meant

²⁰ But see below for 'Greater Syria'.

²¹ I no longer accept the dating in Cotton, Cockle and Millar 'Papyrology' of no. 332 (*P. Mur* 116) and nos. 336–7 (*P. Mur* 113 and 114) – all of them in Greek – to the period after 135; they should be dated to the period before the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135/6 (see Cotton and Eck 2002); the other documents, nos. 333–5 and nos. 338–42 – in Latin and Greek – are either doubtful cases or come from Roman military circles, where the use of Aramaic cannot be expected anyway.

²² Both Nessana and Petra belonged in the sixth century to Palaestina Salutaris/Tertia, which included southern Jordan, the Negev and the Sinai – territories which belonged to the Nabataean kingdom when it was redacted into the province of Arabia.

²³ Some of the seventh-century papyri from Nessana have Arabic as well: see Cotton, Cockle and Millar 'Papyrology': nos. 571–609: 'Appendix: Documents from Nessana of the Early Islamic Period'.

²⁴ See Cotton 2007a.

²⁵ Lewis 1993: 277.

conducting official business in Greek, which in turn diminished the socio-economic viability of the vernaculars'.²⁶

Lewis was wrong. The Aramaic legal contract in Syria Palaestina remained alive and vibrant – at least in some form – for centuries to come, as must be inferred from the running commentaries in Hebrew on its formulae in the Mishnah and the Toseftah. It will resurface, for example, in the late contracts of the Cairo Genizah.²⁷ Elsewhere too, legal documents in the Semitic languages continued to be written, as is shown in the use of Syriac for legal transactions in Osroene in the mid-third century: *P. Dura* 28, a deed of sale,²⁸ and two other parchments, *P. Euphr. Syr* A and B, an acknowledgement of receipt of debt from a third party and a lease of land respectively – all of them written under direct Roman rule.²⁹

This is not to deny that the overwhelming majority of legal documents in the Roman Near East were written in Greek.³⁰ As it happens, the impact of the transition from native to direct Roman rule is nowhere better attested than in the province of Arabia, the former Nabataean realm: there are *no* documents written in Greek (or Jewish Aramaic) from the Nabataean period; whereas after 106 as against two Nabataean contracts and four written in Jewish Aramaic we have altogether thirty-two Greek documents from the period between 106 and 132.³¹ True, the number of documents is small and restricted to a few family archives, and at this level statistical interpretations must be meaningless – but one can work only with what one has.

The phenomenon observed here – the faint reflection³² of the vernacular in legal and administrative documents and its eclipse by the current Reichssprache – is by no means unique to the province of Arabia, as emerges from the case of the Demotic language in Egypt mentioned above, nor is it unique to the Roman phase in the Near East. All over the

²⁶ Lewis 2001: 181.

²⁷ See Cotton 2003a: 5–8; Lewis relied partly on the dating in Cotton, Cockle and Millar 'Papyrology': nos. 332–42, on which see n. 21 above.

²⁸ *P. Dura* 28, Edessa (243 CE) = Cotton, Cockle and Millar 'Papyrology': no. 160 = Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac*: Appendix 1, P. 1, pp. 232–6; *P. Euphr. Syr.* A (240 CE) and B (242 CE) = Cotton, Cockle and Millar 'Papyrology': nos. 157 and 159 = Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac* Appendix 1, P. 2 and P. 3, pp. 237–48. See bibliography in Cotton, Cockle and Millar 'Papyrology', ad loc.

²⁹ On the wider context see Millar *Roman Near East*: 452–81.

³⁰ Apart from the three documents mentioned in note 28, all the other documents in the archives from Mesopotamia, *P. Euphr.* 1–17, are in Greek with the exception of some of the signatures, on which see Cotton 2003b: 54. For the final publication see Feissel and Gascou 'Documents I' and 'Documents III'; Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor 'Documents II'.

³¹ See Meyer 2007: 79–82, accounting for the different pace of Romanisation in Judaea and Arabia; for another explanation see Cotton 1999: 230–1.

³² On signatures and subscriptions, see Cotton 1996b and Schiffman 2003.

Near East for hundreds of years literate notaries and scribes conducted legal and administrative affairs in a language that did not necessarily correspond to the vernacular of either ruler or subject. A striking example are unpublished Aramaic documents from north-central Afghanistan, ancient Bactria, which date to the second half of the fourth century BCE: regardless of the identity of the ruling power at the time, whether it was the Persian Artaxerxes or the Macedonian Alexander, these administrative documents are written in the *Reichsaramäisch* of the time by a Persian Satrap to his Persian subordinate. The job is executed by a scribe: 'Daizaka the scribe is in charge of this document' (A4, l. 6).³³

One should 'mind the gap' between reality and its epigraphic representation.³⁴ What is no longer available to us has to be taken into account no less than what has reached us, as Werner Eck reminds us at the beginning of this volume.³⁵ The written record is neither self-evident, nor necessarily representative.³⁶ The imperial period in the Near East is marked by the advent of the Greek language which penetrates everywhere. This is masterfully surveyed and displayed in Fergus Millar's *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 332*: in the smallest out-of-the-way villages we find Greek inscriptions. Many of the contributions in this volume bear witness to this. The indigenous languages, above all the several variants of Aramaic, seem to be on the wane – so far as can be gathered from the written record, and more than anywhere else in legal and administrative documents. This is only to be expected in view of the fact that the Roman Empire communicated with its subjects in the Near East in Greek. The use of Greek increased with the impact of empire.³⁷ But how deep must one probe beneath the written surface to discover the vernacular and the indigenous?³⁸

Thus it seems to me pertinent and legitimate to ask: what happened to the Nabataean legal system with the disappearance of the Nabataean

³³ The documents presented in summer 2003 at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem by Shaul Shaked have been ready for publication for over two years now as *Aramaic Documents from Ancient Bactria* by Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked. I am grateful to Shaul Shaked for the information. See Shaked 2004.

³⁴ See Cotton 2005, conceived in tandem with the present article.

³⁵ See Eck in this volume, pp. 16–19.

³⁶ To quote Seth Schwartz: 'In some cases writing may reflect no more than scribal practice. And in all cases writing is necessarily related to speech in highly complex and sometimes highly attenuated ways' (Schwartz 1995: 13); even more intriguing and surprising are the manifestations of 'literacy in an oral environment', see Macdonald 2005.

³⁷ See Eck 2000, 2004 and 2007.

³⁸ See the masterful vindication of the tenacity of Aramaic in the Near East against both Greek and Arabic in Hoyland 2004, modifying Wasserstein 2003.

legal document? What happened to the indigenous law? Fergus Millar, discussing the Babatha archive (*P. Yadin*) observes: 'So far as this archive can show, a legal system using Nabataean ceased almost at once when the area became a province.'³⁹ Can this be the whole truth? Did Nabataean law die out with the disappearance of the Nabataean legal document, i.e. with the disappearance of the legal document written in the Nabataean language? Are we to assume that the language change brought about a total change of legal practices? Was the Greek legal instrument a vehicle of a new legal system, and if so, what system? Certainly, despite some formal features visible in the documents from the Judean Desert, it was not likely to have been the law of the Roman ruling power, the *ius civile* formulated in Latin and designed exclusively for Roman citizens,⁴⁰ especially in branches of the law of persons including the law of marriage, divorce and succession.⁴¹

The example of the Coptic legal document springs to mind. The invention of the Coptic script, which uses 'the alphabetic simplicity of Greek', did not occur merely to remedy the fact that it was impossible for the majority of the population to record anything in their own language.⁴² The linguistic reality is far more complex, not least because Coptic contains a large quantity of Greek words, and assumes some knowledge of Greek. Nevertheless the appearance of Coptic is a remarkable fact.⁴³ The Coptic legal document becomes common only after the end of Roman rule and the arrival of the Arabs, that is in the mid-seventh century CE.⁴⁴ Does the Coptic legal document take up where the Demotic legal document had left off?⁴⁵ Is there continuity after a hiatus of *c.* 350 years,⁴⁶ not only in language but also in legal formulae and content; or is the Coptic document no more than a Greek legal document in Coptic dress? Those who uphold the idea of continuity suggest two ways in which the Demotic legal tradition could have been preserved without being written for hundreds of years. It is suggested that oral transmission somehow kept the Demotic legal tradition alive. Alternatively, it may have been

³⁹ Millar 1987: 153, but see Millar *Roman Near East*: 400–28 in great detail on the linguistic situation in Nabataea/Arabia.

⁴⁰ I am aware of course that this is a sweeping statement that should be slightly modified by such observations as those made in Wacke 1993.

⁴¹ See now Cotton 2007b: 236. ⁴² Bagnall *Egypt*: 235.

⁴³ See Richter in this volume, pp. 405–7.

⁴⁴ Although a few are dated to the sixth, see Richter *Rechtsemanantik*: 20–4.

⁴⁵ On the Demotic legal document and its disappearance, see Depauw 2003 and Muhs 2005.

⁴⁶ See Bagnall and Worp: 2004; Richter *Rechtsemanantik*: Vorwort zur 2. Auflage (kindly sent me by the author in advance of publication).

preserved in the Greek documents of the succeeding ages to re-appear later in the Coptic document.⁴⁷ The whole subject lay virtually dormant for nearly half a century⁴⁸ following Schiller's monograph of 1957, to be picked up again and examined in detail in Richter's new study – with negative results: there was no line of continuity between the Demotic and the Coptic legal document.⁴⁹

For my purpose here, however, the questions are far more important than the answers. To some extent the situation with Nabataean law parallels that of Egyptian law, although the material at our disposal is far more limited. The equivalent of the Demotic and Coptic documents would be the Nabataean and early Arabic legal documents respectively. The Nabataean legal tradition could be expected to resurface in early Arabic documents, if indeed at least part of the Nabataean population in the province of Arabia used Arabic in their daily life.⁵⁰ Healey for example concludes his paper on 'Sources for the Study of Nabataean Law' with the surmise that: 'much of this legal tradition survived in northern Arabia into the Byzantine and early Islamic periods. The potential of this material in relation to the study of the historical roots of Islamic law is considerable.'⁵¹

However, continuity cannot be taken for granted. Continuity has to be proven, and its exact manifestations, whether in vocabulary, formulae or legal norms, have to be sought out. Comparison between the Nabataean and early Arab/Muslim legal documents is quite beyond my skills and expertise.⁵² The theme is touched upon again and again, mainly through terminology and formulae, in the extensive commentary to the Nabataean papyri from Nahal Hever by Ada Yardeni and Baruch Levine, which has laid the foundation for many discussions to come.⁵³

Since, as stated at the beginning of this exercise, my aim is to seek out continuity of substantive Nabataean law, rather than of legal terminology and formulae, it seems legitimate, and as we shall soon see, profitable,

⁴⁷ Schiller 1957. ⁴⁸ But see Lüddeckens 1972 and Berg-Onstwedder 1996.

⁴⁹ Richter *Rechtsschmantik*: 28–57, esp. 31–6.

⁵⁰ I do not wish to enter here into the vexed question of 'Who were the Nabataeans?', the topic of a roundtable discussion held at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem on 20 November 2002, in which some of the contributors to this volume took part. That some of the Nabataeans were Arabic speakers is accepted by everyone, and this is sufficient for the present discussion. See Millar's contribution to this volume, p. 3; Macdonald 1998, 2000 and 2003: 50–1, and Knauf (in press).

⁵¹ Healey 1993: 210. ⁵² See Khan 1994, whose conclusions I do not find convincing.

⁵³ Yadin, Greenfield, Yardeni and Levine *Documents*; see pp. 405–10 for Nabataean–Aramaic glossary with Arabic loan words; see also Levine 2000.

to tap also legal documents written in Greek from Arabia.⁵⁴ A native legal system using Greek rather than Nabataean Aramaic may have survived the demise of the Nabataean legal document,⁵⁵ especially that part of the Nabataean, as of any, legal system which is more tenacious than others, namely the law of persons: the law of marriage, divorce and succession.

One way by which we could reach positive results is to find a distinctive legal norm present in both the early Nabataean and the Greek documents from the first two centuries of our era in Arabia resurfacing in one or both of the two bodies of later documents from the area that was once part of Nabataea and later of the province of Arabia, that is the Greek papyri from Petra and Nessana.⁵⁶ Such detective work is far from easy in view of the process of standardisation of law which took place in late antiquity, when Roman law, having absorbed local variations, was codified, with the result that the notaries and scribes could be expected to reproduce in their legal contracts a more or less unified legal pattern.⁵⁷ However, this trend was not total and local variations were not altogether stamped out, certainly not as far as the formal aspects of the contracts (its diplomatics) are concerned, as was already pointed out long ago by Hans-Julius Wolff.⁵⁸ I shall deliberately steer clear of the diplomatics of legal contracts, in which I would include the legal formulae, which distinguish the Greek papyri from Arabia from those of the Greek papyri in Egypt.⁵⁹ Semitisms and closer resemblances to the papyri from the rest of the Roman Near East, from Dura-Europus, the Euphrates, Bostra, etc. rather than to the Egyptian counterparts are only to be expected. On the other hand it is obvious that even the early Greek contracts, I mean those which are written immediately after annexation, are not, with one or two exceptions,⁶⁰ literal translations of Aramaic legal texts, but the creations of scribes fluent in Greek and familiar with the style of the Greek document. Thus on two occasions we find a groom agreeing, in exchange for the dowry, to carry out his obligations towards his wife and children 'in accordance with *nomos hellenikos*' (ἐλληνικῷ νόμῳ) in the

⁵⁴ Albeit written in Greek, they too may on occasion faithfully reflect the legal formulae of an Aramaic Urtext of which the Greek text is but a servile translation; see Cotton's commentary on *P. Hever* 64 in Cotton and Yardeni 1997.

⁵⁵ Cf. Millar quoted above at text to n. 39.

⁵⁶ Although at the time they were written both Petra and Nessana were part of Palaestina Salutaris/Tertia.

⁵⁷ See Arjava 2003–4.

⁵⁸ Wolff 1961. See now Arjava 2007.

⁵⁹ Cf. Koenen 2001.

⁶⁰ Above n. 54.

Babatha archive,⁶¹ expanded to ‘in accordance with *nomos hellenikos* and *hellenikos tropos*’ (νόμ[ω ἑλληνικῷ καὶ ἑλλ[η]νικῷ τρόπῳ) in the Salome Komaise archive.⁶² This ‘Hellenismus’, as was pointed out long ago by H.-J. Wolff,⁶³ and rearticulated by Abraham Wasserstein, was ‘a *koine* of private law arising from the amalgam of Greek and oriental institutes’.⁶⁴ To my mind, notwithstanding the fact that by the sixth century the contractors were all Roman citizens and formally subject to the *ius civile*, the *ethos Romaikos* (ἔθει Ρωμαϊκῷ) in *P. Nessana* 18, l. 20 and 20, l. 21, both marriage contracts, from 537 and 558 respectively, carries the same connotation as the *nomos hellenikos* of the much earlier papyri, as is clear from their presence in an identical context; both phrases are the underpinning of the groom’s obligations consequent upon receiving the dowry.⁶⁵

I can envision one objection to using *P. Yadin* and *P. Hever* as evidence for Nabataean law: seeing that these papyri were written for Jews and by Jews, I could be charged with mistaking for Nabataean law what was in reality Jewish law. But Jewish law in its halakhic or rabbinic form was still in the process of evolving, let alone becoming canonic. Any points of contact the Greek – and also the Semitic – documents from Nahal Hever share with later rabbinic civil law were, when they were composed, part of a common law of the Greco-Roman Near East. In other words, what we witness is *not* the impact of Jewish law on the documents but rather the reverse: the *halakha* adopted the legal usage reflected in the documents.⁶⁶

⁶¹ The Babatha archive, *P. Yadin* 18 (128 CE), lines 14–17 = lines 47–52: ἃ ὁμολόγησεν [Ιουδα Κίμβερ] δοῦναι αὐτῇ πρὸς τὰ τῆς προγεγραμμένης προσφορὰς αὐτῆς πάντα εἰς λόγον προίκοις αὐτῆς ἀκολουθῶς αἰρέσει τροφῆς καὶ ἀμφιασμοῦ αὐτῆς τε καὶ τῶν μελλόντων τέκνων ἑλληνικῷ νόμῳ ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰοῦδα Κίμβ[ε]ρο[ς] πίστewας καὶ κινδύνου κτλ.

⁶² *P. Hever* 65 (131 CE), lines 7–10: [ἃ ὁμολογήσατο ὁ γήμας ἀπ[ε]ρχε[σ]ταί παρ’ αὐτῆς τῇ [οὐ]τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τεμνογ[ρ]αφίαν κοσμίας γυναικίας ἐν ἀργύρῳ καὶ χρυσῷ καὶ ἱματισμῷ καὶ εἰσόδῳ γυναικίαις ἀξί[ο]χρεαν] του ἀργυρίου, ἐν αἰρέσει τροφῆς [καὶ ἀμφιασμοῦ αὐτῆς] τε καὶ τῶν μελλόντων τέκνων νόμ[ω ἑλληνικῷ καὶ ἑλλ[η]νικῷ τρόπῳ ἐπὶ τῆς [τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦς] πίστεως] καὶ κινδύνου πάν[των] ὑπαρχόντων.

⁶³ Wolff 1961: 142–3: ‘Übrigens muss in diesem Zusammenhang [i.e. of the Greek legal contract in the East] der Ausdruck “Hellenismus” wohl in dem weiten Sinne verstanden werden dass er Institute umfasste, die ihren Ursprung in anderen Volksrechten des Ostens hatten, aber von den griechischen Urkundenschreibern aufgegriffen, griechischen Denk- und Sprachformen angepasst worden.’

⁶⁴ Ibid., and see Wasserstein 1989: 120.

⁶⁵ I cite the context from the more complete *P. Nessana* 18, lines 16–21: ὁμολογ[ε]ῖ [δὲ τῇ Αἰνᾷ ὁ εἰρημένος Αλγεβ Αλοβαιου? τὸν] γαμετὴν ὀφείλειν τε αὐτῇ καὶ κληρονόμοις αὐτῆς καὶ διαδόχοις? c. 8] τὰς προγεγραμμένας τῆς προίκοις χρυσοῦ οὐγκίας ἕξ καὶ τὰ προγεγραμμένα? νομίσματα ἕξ ὅῃμα προικιμ[αίον] ὁ καὶ παραδῶσει? c. 19] τας ἔθει Ρωμαϊκῷ καὶ χωρὶς πά[σης] ἀντιλογίας καὶ ζητήσεως?

⁶⁶ See Cotton 1998b; cf. Schäfer 2003: 21–2; contra Katzoff 2000: 324–7.

What follows is devoted to the examination of a single legal item in *P. Petra* 1, which suggests a possible continuity of the pre-Roman Nabataean law of persons into late antique Petra, now 'the Antonine imperial colony, the distinguished and native mother of colonies, Hadrianic Petra, Metropolis of the Third Palestine Salutaris'.⁶⁷

P. Petra 1 of 537 CE is a post-nuptial agreement, described in the text itself as an ἔνγραφος ἀσφάλεια (l. 6), 'which can mean any kind of a written agreement',⁶⁸ between Theodoros son of Obodianos, and his maternal uncle, Patrophilos, son of Bassos. Theodoros is married to his cousin Stephanous, who is Patrophilos' daughter. I am interested in the legal situation revealed in lines 11–16 where we are told that the dowry of Theodoros' mother has been ceded to her son by his maternal uncle, Patrophilos, who has just become his father in-law. The syntax of these lines is unfortunately obscure:

11. ...ἐπείπερ θ[c. 10]
12. προικὸς τῆς [μ]ακαριστάτης ἐρε[...γε]ναμέ[ν]ης Θεοδώρου τ[οῦ]
13. εὐδοκιμοτάτου μητρὸς ἐξεχωρή[θη] ὁ αὐτὸς εὐδοκιμότατος
Θ[εό]δ[ω]ρος
14. παρὰ τοῦ εἰρημένου εὐδοκιμοτάτου Πατροφίλου Βάσσου...[c. 7]
15. τα⁶⁹ καὶ περιεχόμενα τῇ γενομέ[ν]ῃ [ἐν]γράφ[ω] ἐ[κ]χωρήσει εἰς
[τὸν αὐτὸν]
16. εὐδοκιμότατον Θεόδωρον·

Because...the dowry of the most blessed Hiereia(?), the deceased mother of the most honourable Theodoros was ceded (had been ceded?) to the same most honourable Theodoros by the said most honourable Patrophilos, son of Bassos, [which were...] and also included in a written deed of cession in favour of the...[same] most honourable Theodoros.

Why did the mother's dowry end up in the hands of her brother in the first place when, as the editor, Antti Arjava, observes: 'according to the normal rules of inheritance, Theodoros should have inherited it

⁶⁷ Lines 4–5: ἐν Αὐγουστοκωνίᾳ [Ἀ]λτωνιανῇ ἐ[π]ι[ε]λήμ[ω] καὶ ἐ[γγεν]εῖ μ[η]τρί κ[ολωνιῶν] Ἀδριανῇ Πέτρα μητροπόλει τῆς Τρίτης Παλαιστίνης Καλουτ[αρίας].

⁶⁸ See *P. Petra* I.1, p. 24.

⁶⁹ τὰ; in the first edition, but here τα is taken to be the last syllable of a word in the previous line. As a result my translation differs somewhat from that of the first edition. The editor tells me that 'the scribe does not seem to divide words between lines (except compounds), so it is less likely that τα could be the end of a word'. However, such a word division occurs in lines 56–7 of the present document: [τοῦ εἰρη-] / μένου Πατροφίλου. Robert Daniel (personal communication) does not think that there is sufficient evidence to prove that 'the scribes imposed on themselves the rule that they may divide only compounds'.

immediately following his parents' death'?⁷⁰ Arjava offers three solutions as to why the mother's dowry was ceded to her son by his maternal uncle:

1. That the mother's dowry was returned to her father Bassos (Theodoros' grandfather and Patrophilos' father) after her death in compliance with a contract between the couple which stipulated the return of the dowry upon the dissolution of the marriage. In this way Patrophilos inherited it from his father (Bassos).
2. That Patrophilos only administered the dowry for his nephew.
3. That Theodoros had ceded to his uncle his mother's dowry which is now being ceded back to him.

The second option is unacceptable since a formal deed of cession (ἐκχώρησις, l. 15) could hardly be needed in such a case. The third option is syntactically inadmissible: reading something like [τῆς] προικὸς ἐξεχώρη[σεν] ὁ αὐτὸς εὐδοκιμώτατος Θ[εό]δ[ω]ρος, leaves the παρὰ τοῦ εἰρημένου εὐδοκιμοτάτου Πατροφίλου unaccounted for, as the editor himself admits, whereas ἐξεχώρη[θη] may have as its grammatical subject the person to whom something is given. Thus we are left with the first possibility only, which is also unsatisfactory since as the editor himself admits 'usually such agreements did not interfere with the children's inheritance right'.⁷¹ This at least was the norm according to Roman law. However, perhaps another legal system, or its remnant, is lurking here. Is it possible that some norms of Nabataean personal law, or, to be precise, of the Nabataean law of succession, were still observed despite the imposed uniformity in that part of the Roman world?

The fact that the mother's dowry was in the hands of the maternal uncle and was ceded by him to his nephew evokes the legal situation in *P. Yadin* 5, the earliest Greek document from the Babatha archive from the Roman period. It is dated to 110 CE, only four years after the annexation of the kingdom. It attests the existence of joint property between two brothers, one of whom had recently died. The property includes the dowry, or bride money, of the wife of the deceased brother – presumably because of the minority of the orphaned nephew. The document itself is an acknowledgement of debt by the paternal uncle, Joseph son of Joseph, made to his nephew, Babatha's first husband, Jesus son of Jesus (and not, as was once thought, to her orphaned son, who was also Jesus son of Jesus):

I, Joseph son of Joseph, also called Zabouda, of Mahoza, acknowledge to you Jesus son of my brother Jesus, from the same place that you have with me a

⁷⁰ *P. Petra* I, p. 25.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

thousand and a hundred and twenty silver ‘blacks’ as a deposit of all the property/assets of silver and deeds of debt, investment in a workshop, value of figs, value of wine, value of dates, value of oil and of every manner [of thing] large and small, from everything which was found [to belong] to your father and me, between me and him (πάντω[ν] ὧν εὐρέθη πατρὶς ε[ο]υ καὶ μοι μεταξύ μου καὶ α[ὐ]τοῦ) [namely] one thousand and a hundred and twenty ‘blacks’, in addition to seven hundreds and ten ‘blacks’ of silver which your mother had from your father as her wedding silver, and which she had [as a lien] against Jesus, your father (ὑπὲρ ἀργυρίου μέλανας ἐπτακόσιους καὶ δέκα οὖς εἰλ[η]φεν ἡ μήτηρ σου ἀργύριον γαμικὸν αὐτῆς [ὅ]ν εἰχ[ε]ν κατ[ὰ] Ἰησοῦ πατρ[ο]ός σου). (*P. Yadin* 5, lines 5–16)

That the ‘wedding silver’, and hence the legal system which governed it, goes back to the Nabataean period is clear from the fact that the sums of money are stated in ‘blacks’, which is the old Nabataean silver.⁷² There is another Nabataean feature in this document: the fine to the Roman emperor καὶ Καίσαρι ὡσαύτως (*Frag.* a, col. i, l. 10), which substitutes for the fine to the Nabataean king in the Nabataean legal document: כות מלכה רבאל ולמראנא רבאל (‘and to our lord Rab’el the king likewise’, e.g. *P. Yadin* 1, lines 9–19, 42, 43).⁷³ However, in this case it would seem that the nephew, once he has come of age, could call back the debt now in the possession of his paternal uncle. Unfortunately we do not have the sequel: both nephew and uncle disappear subsequently from the archive.⁷⁴

Were this the only piece of evidence for the special role played by an uncle in questions of inheritance and succession, I would admit that I have hardly a leg to stand on. However, some of the documents give the clear impression that uncles, and more specifically paternal uncles (or agnatic brothers to use the Roman terminology), held a strong position, at least against daughters, in these early archives.⁷⁵ Various claims and counter-claims suggest that the brother of the deceased, and consequently also his descendants, who happen to be males, have a better claim to the inheritance than the children, who happen to be females.

In *P. Yadin* 20 of 130 CE the guardians of the orphans of her paternal uncle, Jesus son of Eleazar Khthousion, concede to Shelamzion daughter

⁷² See Weiser and Cotton 1996.

⁷³ See the excellent discussion of the phrase in Newman 2004: 247–51.

⁷⁴ Although Joseph is mentioned again in Babatha’s petition to the governor in *P. Yadin* 13, l. 8, but the context is obscure.

⁷⁵ See Cotton and Greenfield 1994; Cotton 1997; modified in Cotton 1998a.

of Judah son of Eleazar Khthousion (the orphans' uncle) a courtyard in Ein Gedi which belonged to their common grandfather:

We acknowledge that we have conceded to you, from the property of Eleazar, also known as Khthousion, son of Judah, your grandfather, a courtyard with all its rights in Ein Gedi and the rooms with it. (lines 27–30 = lines 6–10)⁷⁶

Either the grandfather, Eleazar Khthousion, outlived his son, Judah, or Shelamzion came into the possession of her grandfather's courtyard due to her father's recent death. The fact that Judah's nephews appear to have disputed Shelamzion's ownership may suggest that in the prevailing legal system, the granddaughter did not automatically acquire her father's right to the inheritance.⁷⁷

In *P. Yadin* 23 and 24 of 130 CE the guardian of the same orphans (i.e. sons of Jesus son of Eleazar Khthousion) sue Babatha for 'confiscating' three orchards owned by her late second husband, Judah son of Eleazar Khthousion, who was their paternal uncle. Besas son of Judah, threatens Babatha that he will register three date orchards of her dead husband in Maḥoza in the nephews' name, unless she produces written evidence that she has a right to them:

I, therefore, summon you to disclose to me what document you possess as proof (π[ο]λ[ύ]ω δικαίωματι) that you have the right to hold the said entities. If you refuse to disclose know that I am registering them (ἀπογράφ[ομαι]) in the ἀπογραφή in the name of the said orphans. (*P. Yadin* 24, lines 6–9)⁷⁸

In *P. Yadin* 25 Iulia Crispina, who describes herself as the *episcopus* of the same orphans, insists that Babatha is distraining property which belongs by law to the orphans.⁷⁹ It is striking that nothing whatsoever is said about the claims of Judah's own daughter Shelamzion. She was still alive on 19 June 130 (*P. Yadin* 20), five months before Besas charges Babatha with illegal distraint of her late husband's property. Unless we assume that she died between 19 June and 17 November of 130, or that Judah wrote a will in favour of his nephews,⁸⁰ we can infer that the law of succession in force at that time in the province of Arabia did not automatically grant a

⁷⁶ Ὁμολογοῦμεν [παρ]αειληχθῆναι εἰς ἐξ ὑπαρχόντων Ἐλεζάρου τοῦ καὶ Χθουσίωνος τοῦ Ἰούδου π[α]τρὸς σου αὐτὴν ἐν παντὶ δικαίῳ αὐτῆς ἐν {ε} Ἡγαδοῖς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ οἰκίας.

⁷⁷ See Cotton 1996a.

⁷⁸ See Cotton 1997: 184 on the meaning of ἀπογραφή, ἀπογράφομαι and δικαίωμα in this context.

⁷⁹ *P. Yadin* 25, lines 9–10: . . . ὑπαρχόντων τῶν αὐτῶν ὀρφαν[ῶ]ν βία διακρατῖς ἃ οὐκ ἀνήκεν σοι.

⁸⁰ An assumption made by Lewis 1989: 107, who suggests that we restore ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ αὐτοῦ in *P. Yadin* 24, line 6.

daughter the right to inherit from her father when in competition with sons of her father's brother or his male descendants.⁸¹

Combining the evidence for preferring the claims of uncles and their male descendants in these documents with the presence of deeds of gift in favour of females *only* in the archives,⁸² I have gone so far as to say that

the deed of gift was the only way in which property could devolve on women in this society. The law of intestate succession simply sidestepped wives and daughters, even in the absence of a male heir, and the deed of gift came to mitigate the rigour of rules of succession which were prejudicial to women. To use Roman legal terminology: wives and daughters were not the *sui heredes* of their husbands and fathers.⁸³

Now these preferences were not imposed by Jewish law; on the contrary they stand in flat contradiction to Jewish law, both biblical and rabbinic, which always preferred the children of the deceased, whether male or female, to siblings of the deceased and their children on the father's side.⁸⁴ In other words, what we see in operation in these archives is neither Jewish law, nor Roman law, both of which put the claims of children before those of any other blood relations. In all likelihood then it is the local law of the Nabataeans which is reflected in the papyri from the Judean Desert, and what we read in lines 11–16 of *P. Petra* 1 suggests that it had survived into the sixth century, not necessarily as part of a legal code, perhaps merely as a compelling social custom. Antti Arjava rightly insists⁸⁵ on the *mutatis mutandis*: in *P. Yadin* it is the paternal uncles, or rather their male descendants, who make the claims against female descendants, whereas here we have a maternal uncle of a male descendant. Furthermore, in the *dialysis*, it is made clear that

⁸¹ All this is argued at much greater length in the articles mentioned in n. 75.

⁸² There is also a deed of gift from a man to his wife among the tomb inscriptions from Mada'in Salih: 'And he gave this tomb to Amah, his wife, daughter of Gulhumu, from the date of the deed of gift which is in her hand, that she might do with it whatever she wishes' (Healey *Tomb Inscriptions*: 27, Healey's translation), see n. 11 above, and see also Shiffman 1964: 19.

⁸³ Cotton 1997: 185–6. But I went too far: I now accept Oudshoorn's qualifications. Her idea that the change of legal status from a non-married to a married woman is at issue, and that only married daughters were denied intestate inheritance, accounts better for the fact that the three deeds of gifts in the archives were written on the occasion of a marriage; it also fits into the wider geographical context of the Ancient Near East; see Oudshoorn 2005: chapter 4; see also the interesting study of Ben-Barak 2003.

⁸⁴ Numbers 27:8: 'When a man dies leaving no son, his patrimony shall pass to his daughter. If he has no daughter, you shall give it to his brothers'; and again in *mBaba Bathra* 8.2: 'The son precedes the daughter, and all the son's offspring precede the daughter; the daughter precedes the brothers (of the deceased)'.

⁸⁵ In correspondence.

Stephanous will be inheriting her father's entire property. 'There was no problem in having a female heir, quite in accordance with imperial law.'⁸⁶

Be this as it may, the paramount importance of the mother's dowry ceded by Patrophilos to his nephew and son-in-law, Theodoros, in *P. Petra* 1 is very obvious, and must reflect its great value: it included immovables (ἀκεί[ν]ητα πράγμα[τα], l. 21), in all likelihood land or houses. It occupies the first two of the four conditions of the agreement (διάλυσις) reached between the parties before the present document,⁸⁷ and constitutes its core:⁸⁸ in the event of Theodoros' death the dowry will go either to his wife, Stephanous, or, if she too dies, to her father, Patrophilos.

1. (lines 18–22): If it should happen that the most honourable Theodoros dies without a child while his spouse, the most virtuous Stephanous, survives him, *all* the immovable property which her father, the said most honourable Patrophilos, had ceded to him [to Theodoros] shall go and devolve upon the same most virtuous Stephanous.⁸⁹
2. (lines 22–26): If the same most virtuous Stephanous dies and after her also the same most honorable Theodoros – let this not happen – [all the property which had been ceded] shall devolve upon [his most honourable uncle] Patrophilos or his heirs.⁹⁰
3. (lines 26–30): If it should happen that the said most honorable Patrophilos himself dies [and] leaves behind [the same Stephanous], the most virtuous spouse of Theodoros and the daughter of [Patrophilos] himself, it was agreed that all (the property) of the same most honorable Patrophilos shall go and devolve upon the same Stephanous.⁹¹
4. (lines 30–35): But if the most virtuous Stephanous [dies] while the [said] most honorable Patrophilos and [Theodoros both survive her] and (later) the same most honorable Patrophilos departs from life without a child altogether, his

⁸⁶ Arjava 2003–4: 15.

⁸⁷ I think that the restoration of πάντα τὰ ἐκχωρηθέντα at the end of line 24 must be correct.

⁸⁸ καὶ ἐν τοῖς [μ]εταξὺ αὐτῶν κατὰ τὸν κα[ί]ρὸν] τῆς διαλύσεως λαλοῦμενοις συνείδον[τες] [μ]υμνησ[αν]τες ἀλλήλοις] ὡς κτλ, lines 16–18.

⁸⁹ εἰ μὲν συμβῇ Θε[ο]δωρο[ν] τὸν εὐδοκ[ι]μό[τ]ατο[ν] ἄπαιδα τελευτήσαι] περιούσης τῆς κοσμοτάτης Ο[υ]δοκίμης αὐτοῦ γαμε[τ]ῆς, πάντα τὰ ἐκχωρηθέντα] αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ [εἰρημένου] εὐ[δοκ]ιμ[ό]τατου] Πατροφίλου αὐτῆς πατρὸς ἀκεί[ν]ητα πράγμα[τα] ἔρχεσθαι κ[αί] κατατάν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν κοσμοτά[τ]ην Σεφανοῦν.

⁹⁰ εἰ δὲ [τελευτήσαι] ἡ αὐτὴ κοσμοτάτῃ Σεφανοῦς, τελε[υ]τήσῃ δὲ με[τ]’ αὐτὴν καὶ ὅπερ ἀπείη ὁ εὐδοκ[ι]μό[τ]ατος Θε[ο]δωρος, πάντα τὰ ἐκχωρηθέντα] ἔρχεσθαι] εἰς Π[α]τρ[ό]φ[ι]λου] τ[ὸν] εὐδοκ[ι]μό[τ]ατον] θ[ε]οῖον αὐτοῦ ἡγουν] εἰς κληρονόμους αὐτοῦ.

⁹¹ εἰ[δ]ὲ συμβῇ τὸν εἰρημέν[ον] εὐ[δοκ]ιμ[ό]τατον] Πατρόφιλον καὶ αὐτὸν τελευτήσαι], α[. . .] κατ[α]λείψαι τ[ὴν] αὐτὴν Σεφανοῦν] τὴν κοσμοτάτην γαμετήν [μ]ὲν Θεο[δ]ώρου, αὐτοῦ δὲ [Πατροφίλου] θυγατέρα, ἔδοξεν εἰς] αὐτὴν Σεφ[α]νοῦν ἔρχεσθαι] καὶ κατατάν] τὰ αὐτοῦ Πατροφίλου τοῦ εὐδοκ[ι]μοτάτου] πάντα.

property shall go and devolve upon the said [most honourable] Theodoros, his nephew and son-in-law.⁹²

Why was the dowry so important? Why is Theodoros's paternal inheritance⁹³ not mentioned in the *dialysis*? We know something of the paternal property,⁹⁴ but obviously Patrophilos had no standing to make conditions about that. At any rate, the dowry is the only asset mentioned in the *dialysis*: were Theodoros to die, what used to be his mother's dowry would go to his wife Stephanous (lines 18–22), and if she is no longer alive, it would go back to her father. I therefore suspect that the ceded dowry was the cause and the purpose of the marriage. I would even go so far as to maintain that, as implied by the term διάλυσις,⁹⁵ the agreement was reached because Patrophilos, the maternal uncle, refused at first to hand over the maternal dowry. Thus the marriage could be seen as a compromise between Patrophilos and Theodoros: the uncle was prepared to yield the dowry on condition that the nephew marry his daughter. Whether or not Patrophilos' refusal to cede the dowry was buttressed by law is hard to know; at least local custom may have been on his side, and we know that the dowry was in his hands.

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⁹² εἰ δὲ τελευτήσῃ ἡ κοσμοτάτη Στεφανοῦς περὶ ὁντων ἀμφοτέρων [τῶν εἰρημένων] εὐδοκιμοτάτων Πατροφίλου καὶ Θεοδώρου καὶ ἅπαις παν[τελῶς τὸν] βίον κ[α]ταλύσαι ὁ αὐτὸς εὐδοκίμοτατος Πατρόφιλος, ἔρχεσθ[αι καὶ] καταντᾶν τὰ αὐτοῦ π[ρ]άγμα[τα εἰς] τὸν εἰ[ρημένον] εὐδοκίμοτατον Θεόδωρον αὐτοῦ ἑξάδεκλον καὶ γαμβρὸν c. 6] ὑπεῖς... [c. 10].

⁹³ His father died before 537, and a curator, Eustathios son of Theon, is present at the signing of *P. Petra* 1 (Εὐστ[α]θ[ί]ου[ς] Θ[έ]ωνος τοῦ εὐ[δ]οκ[ι]μοτάτου) αὐτοῦ κουράτορος περὶ τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων, lines 10–11).

⁹⁴ It is mentioned in *P. Petra* 19 (vineyard), 22 (vineyard and other land), and *Inv.* 83 (house). In addition, a year after the present document Theodoros appears as one of the parties to 'an agreement concerning inherited property' in Gaza in the fragmentary *P. Petra* 2 (538 CE); two years later in *P. Petra* 18 (539 CE): 'Change of dowry agreement', we hear of a dowry he had received from Stephanous. Presumably there was a bridegift (πρὸ γάμου δωρεά), but it is 'nowhere specifically mentioned', see *P. Petra* III, p. 21.

⁹⁵ Which may well be used here in the sense of a compromise reached out of court, and not 'division' as in the first edition (*P. Petra* I, p. 24): see Montevicchi 1973: 231–3; Taubenschlag 1955: 403–6; Kaser 1966: 481–2.

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III

The epigraphic language of religion

*'Languages' and religion in second- to fourth-century
Palestine: in search of the impact of Rome**

Nicole Belayche

Ut liceat Hebraeis qui volunt . . . graeca lingua sacros libros . . . legere
vel etiam patria forte (hac scilicet latina) vel omnino reliquis.

Justinian, *Nov.* 146, I¹

The *Novella* of 553 CE, if seen from a political viewpoint, dates from a centralised era and an Empire that was by and large Christian. And yet it attests to a multilingualism that was a characteristic of the Roman Empire at all periods even in the public realm. Given this fact, linguistic data documented by inscriptions could serve as just one way of evaluating the impact of Rome on local pagan practices in second- to fourth-century Palestine. The questions that this issue arouses go beyond the current theoretical debate about 'Romanisation'.² That has many aspects, of varying significance depending on the particular issue that is addressed, whether juridical, social or cultural. This paradigm, long dominant in studies of Roman provinces, was based on two prejudices: first, a colonial-like conflict category (Romans vs. natives), and second, a preconceived idea of verticality combined with uniformity when studying the governance of cultural procedures. It has been applied mainly to western situations,³ but, even there, the term is so protean and coloured by historiography that S. Alcock (following other scholars) announced its fall a few years ago!⁴ For research on eastern provinces, the concept is even less accurate, because *realia*, possibly resulting from an actual 'Roman' impact, are generally embedded within Hellenistic trends that have a strong legacy in

* I wish to express my gratitude to the organisers for inviting me to the conference and my warm thanks for assistance on the English form.

¹ Translation Linder 1987: 408: 'It shall be permitted to those Hebrews who want it to read the Holy Books . . . in the Greek language . . . or possibly in our ancestral language (we speak of the Italian language), or simply in all the other languages.'

² For the 'new "Romanisation studies"', see Woolf 2000 and 2001.

³ Cf. e.g. Metzler, Millet, Roymans and Slofstra 1995; Webster 2001. For the East, Alcock 1997.

⁴ Alcock 2000: 223. See also Mattingly 2004 and Hingley 2005: 49–71.

those areas.⁵ Yet this should not prevent us from asking about the impact of Rome on local paganisms, if there was any, and from trying to draw methodological lines in order to clarify the process.

The cultural – and thus also religious – picture of Judaea-Palaestina is extremely complex. The population of the province was a mix of Jews, Greco-Syrians⁶ and Romans, with many of them coming from outside. Proportions for each ethnic group changed from the first to the fourth century, especially for Jews and Romans. The two Jewish wars decimated the Jewish population, even if it recovered quickly after 136 CE, though only in particular areas like Galilee and the south of Judaea.⁷ During that same period, people with Roman status increased in number; they were principally military and civilian personnel established in the country more or less permanently, and discharged auxiliaries who had gained enfranchisement.⁸ As a consequence, there was a ‘massive scale of [the] paganisation’ in the area.⁹ All over the province, cities with a Greek tradition, which in the great majority dated back to the Hellenistic period,¹⁰ integrated local features, possibly imported long before, which remained alive under a Greek layer of variable thickness.¹¹ Therefore, scholarly research – like Schürer’s unmatched *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (in the English revision) – identified cultural processes during the Roman period using the overall label of ‘Hellenisation’.¹² This remains true even today when the traditional pattern – of a confrontation between Hellenism and Judaism – has rightly been challenged by the more balanced picture of a cultural blend borrowing its forms from Hellenism.¹³ Rome had made Greek culture hers since the end of the Republic.¹⁴ During the imperial period, Greek influences were

⁵ Lifshitz 1965 and Feldman 1986. According to Wasserstein 1995 this movement was not so profound.

⁶ E.g. in Caesarea Maritima, Jos *BJ* 2.266.

⁷ See the localisation of synagogues, Meyers 1979: 692, map.

⁸ See the *cohors Ia Ascalonitarum Sagitaria*, which served in Syria and whose members received Roman citizenship in 156/7.

⁹ Millar 2006: 144. ¹⁰ Cf. Schürer, Vermes, and Millar *History*: II, 85–183.

¹¹ *Contra* Millar *Roman Near East*; Kennedy 1999: 102 argues against Millar’s ‘historical amnesia’ thesis.

¹² Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: II, 29–80; Hengel 1989: 1. Levine 1998: 26, underlines a shift towards ‘Hellenistic–Roman influence’ and ‘Roman–Byzantine orbit’ as time went on, while still calling the process ‘Hellenization’ (see also at 110 and 119–23 for the discussion on the *Seder*, where no distinction is made between Greek and Roman practices). For the Near East as a whole, see Sartre *Alexandre*: 83–83.

¹³ Bowersock *Hellenism*.

¹⁴ Cf. Millar *Roman Near East*: 235: ‘every aspect of society and culture was influenced both by Greek civilisation and by the progressive extension of Roman rule’. See also Woolf 1994. For a western viewpoint see Wallace-Hadrill 1998.

at their height in the language of aesthetics. Ways of representation were common to the Roman east as a whole, and built on Greco-Hellenistic patterns.¹⁵ This *koine* encompassed the whole ornamental repertoire and led to the diffusion of Roman copies of Greek originals.¹⁶ In the main, these artworks testify to official homage and to the standing of the elite, whether Greek, Roman or Jewish.¹⁷ Such borrowings included the decorative programmes of synagogues, as is well known from the Helios motif, without (e.g. in Sepphoris) or with (e.g. in Hammath Tiberias) the figuration of the god in Byzantine buildings.¹⁸

Given this broad, Palestinian panorama, I shall argue that what one may define as 'Roman' religious practices in a bicultural empire were practices of Romans. This fact explains why they were not deeply anchored in the province as a whole, why they go with the geographical spread of the population involved in imperial business and why we have so little evidence for them after the third century, when the whole population of the Empire became Roman.

NORMS FOR MEASURING ROME'S IMPACT¹⁹

In the 1960s, encouraged by the then current fashion to speak of 'Romanisation', Barbara Levick laid out ways for identifying Roman elements in south-west Asia Minor: 'it seems legitimate to speak of "instruments" of Romanization . . . The most efficacious [were] the army and its discipline, the imperial cult . . . and the colonies'.²⁰ We can easily test her conclusions for Judaea-Palaestina as well. These 'instruments' share two related components that are basic for an understanding of the impact of Rome, although they arouse methodological problems. These are language – a key issue thankfully enriched by the multilingual *Corpus inscriptionum Iudaeae Palaestinae* project – and the religious landscape, outside and inside the colonies, that may be expected to be thoroughly Roman.²¹

¹⁵ See Quet 1981: 'la nouvelle culture syncrétique panhelléno-romaine'.

¹⁶ E.g. the great marble statuary figuring divine or human subjects and imported from Asia Minor workshops, see Avida 1978; Friedland 1999.

¹⁷ Cf. for instance the Leda sarcophagus in Beth Shearim necropolis, Avi Yonah 1967. Stern 1994: 171–81 addresses the key point of 'rabbinic Hellenisation'.

¹⁸ Kühnel 2000 and Weiss 2005. A stimulating analysis by Eliav 2002: 417.

¹⁹ Beard, North and Price 1998: 313–19, address the issue.

²⁰ Levick 1967: 187; see now Yegül 2000. For Near East colonies, Millar 1990: 7: 'the process of colonisation, or of the conferment of the title *colonia*, was also one of many forms of intervention by Rome in the social structures and communal identities of a region long since Hellenised, but where a variety of other ethnic identities . . . were still very important factors'.

²¹ Belayche 2003a.

Both problems have been illuminated by Fergus Millar for the Near East as a whole, and it is not by chance that many of our conference's discussions confronted both subjects.²² In the religious field, and leaving aside colonies intended to reinforce Roman domination, Rome's impact was not a consequence of some deliberate or systematic policy, in spite of conflictual relationships between Jews and Romans up to 136. It was a natural result of the growing Roman population living in the province from the first century onwards. Therefore public evidence constitutes a valid, although also not neutral, body of material here. A Hadrianic coin reverse shows the province of Palaestina personified: she is dressed as a Roman lady, flanked by one to three children symbolising prosperity, while she takes part in a religious ceremony for the emperor's *aduentus*.²³ The scene highlights the province's integration into the Empire's Romanness, depicting it from the point of view of political normalisation. In this view from Rome, the figurative portrayal need not differ in any way from parallel coinage minted for other regions, even if their history and traditions differ.²⁴ It just offers a theoretical presentation.

It is no surprise that Rome's impact is clearest when considered from the viewpoint of territorial domination inside new borders and as undertaken by imperial staffs. In Aelia Capitolina (ex-Jerusalem), it was represented by a wild boar engraved on the marble, western entrance to the colony, in order to publish 'the submission of the Jews to Roman *potestas*', according to Eusebius' explanation.²⁵ For the whole province, explicit symbols of *imperium* were laid down in new names given to Palestinian cities. The practice was first inherited from Hellenistic rulers, and passed then to *philoromaioi* Herodians,²⁶ inspired by a Roman, more precisely an Augustan, model.²⁷ For instance, in Tiberias, renamed Claudiopolis, citizens called themselves ΤΙΒΕΡΙΕΙΣ ΚΑΛΥΔΙΕΙΣ in civic contexts. The new city names were considered by the Roman ruler as an honour granted by him, even when they were longed for by the local elite as well. They

²² Millar *Roman Near East*. In this volume see esp. the papers by Werner Eck and Benjamin Isaac. For other questions, like urbanism and daily life (games and baths), see Sperber 1998 (references to Greek and Roman buildings in Talmudic books); Jacobs 1998; Schwartz 1998: 426 ('filtered or controlled absorption') and Schwartz 2001; Eliav 2000; Meyers 2002; Hoss 2005.

²³ *BMCR* III (1966), nos. 1655–61 and pls. 92, 8 and 9 (Hadrian), and intr. CLXXIV–CLXXII; for the date, CLXXIX ('the unusual sacrificial type with legend *IVDAEA* suggests a definite event, the founding of Aelia Capitolina'). Cf. Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: I, 542, n. 123 and Mildenberg 1984: 97–9.

²⁴ E.g. Italia and Gallia, *BMCR* III (1966), pl. 92, nos. 4 and 6.

²⁵ Eusebius, *Chronicon ab ann. Abr.* 2152 (Schöne II, 169). ²⁶ Kasher 1990.

²⁷ Bloch 2006; Hengel 1989: 33–9.

demonstrated the political control that was successfully undertaken by the city network.²⁸ In second- and third-century Palestine, cities' names proclaimed the link with the emperor and the national Roman god alike. Nearly a quarter of the cities of Roman Palestine bore the name of one and/or the other, whatever their former ethnic *facies* was. *Aelia Capitolina*, *Diocaesarea*, and *Maximianopolis* (named after Galerius) later on, are to be added to the list of Herodian foundations: *Caesarea*, *Sebaste* and *Tiberias*, all intended to honour the emperor in Greco-Roman style. Some of these names devoted cities to Jupiter/J Zeus as well. He was the eponymous god of three renamed Jewish towns: *Aelia Capitolina*, *Diospolis* (ex-Lydda) and *Diocaesarea* (ex-Sepphoris). And yet, in this list, only *Aelia Capitolina* was granted a thoroughly Roman, that is Latin, name,²⁹ while other city names were a mix of Greek and Latin, like the Empire as a whole.³⁰

THE INADEQUACY OF PUBLIC FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE AS A MARKER

The mix of languages overlay cultural identities. If we start from figurative language, city coinage offers us an interesting field of observation for understanding the balance of forces between local types and imported types, Herodian rulers having already integrated the imperial portrait in their coinage. In predominantly Jewish cities, a shift of types is noticeable after the second revolt (132–6). In Tiberias, where Jews were in the majority, coin types until the time of Trajan evoked principally the town's lacustrine situation (with an anchor), the geographic and regional personality (the palm tree), and the city's good fortune (Tyche). The virtues of the hot curative springs were already symbolised by Hygieia nourishing a snake and sitting on a rock with water flowing from it.³¹ From Hadrian's time onwards, these traditional images were supplemented by representations which reflect more the city's integration into a pagan world and imperial Hellenism. Tyche, rightly to be expected in a polis of Greek foundation, her foot on a prow and the horn of plenty and a rudder in her hands,³² was coupled from then on with a more political, Roman message of allegiance to the emperor. Standing in a short oriental tunic,

²⁸ Woolf 1997. Lee 2003: 66–81 for the first century.

²⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.6.4: 'The Roman city which afterwards arose changed its name, and in honour of the reigning emperor Aelius Hadrian was called Aelia.'

³⁰ Veyne 2005.

³¹ *BMC Pal.* nos. 14–17 (palm tree), 3–9 (Tyche), 10–13 (Hygieia). For Hygieia, see Kindler 1961: no. 3b; Meshorer 1985: no. 78.

³² *BMC Pal.* nos. 37 (Commodus); Kindler 1961, no. 4 (Trajan) and 14 (Commodus); Meshorer 1985, nos. 79 (Trajan) and 84 (Commodus). See Belayche 2003b.

she holds the sceptre in one hand and the bust of the *princeps* in the other.³³ Henceforth, alongside the lake intended to signify prosperity,³⁴ new types show pagan deities: Zeus seated in a temple³⁵ and Hygieia facing her father Asclepius, a snake in hand.³⁶ Sarapis is only represented once during Commodus' reign,³⁷ the figuration being either a borrowing from other Palestinian cities (Caesarea, Neapolis), or a recognition of his quality as a healing god as in Aelia Capitolina. Tiberias' baths were famous and frequented by everyone, including Jews and prominent rabbis.³⁸ Although the city was controlled by a Roman garrison from now on, the elite mainly chose Greek types.

Two traditional Jewish cities show a different model. In Sepphoris-Diocaesarea, the coinage featured only aniconic Jewish symbols (the laurel wreath, the palm tree and the wheat sheaf) until the second revolt.³⁹ This respect for the second Commandment offers a good clue to the demographic balance at that time and reflects a peaceful cohabitation between the Jewish population and the Roman order. The 'War of Quietus' under Trajan, and then that of Bar Kokhba under Hadrian, altered that balance. When local coinage was renewed under Antoninus Pius, the city bore a new name and could serve as a reinforcement for control of Galilee, not far from Legio at its southern limits.⁴⁰ The magistrates immediately minted a coin figuring the Capitoline triad,⁴¹ even though the city was not a colony. This was a figurative form of homage to the rulers, since there was no temple building, so far as we know.⁴² This Roman-like issue, similar to one in the colony of Aelia Capitolina, was balanced by coins depicting Greek deities: Zeus, Athena, Hera and Tyche.⁴³ Flanked by the

³³ *BMC Pal.* nos. 29–31 (Hadrian); Kindler 1961: no. 9 (Hadrian); Meshorer 1985: no. 82 (Hadrian). Cf. also the Victory holding the bust of the emperor in one hand and a crown in the other, *BMC Pal.* nos. 32–3 (Hadrian).

³⁴ An anchor and a boat, *BMC Pal.* nos. 34–6 (Hadrian); Kindler 1961: nos. 5 (Trajan) and 10 (Hadrian); Meshorer 1985: nos. 80 (Trajan) and 83 (Hadrian). Poseidon, his foot on a boat and holding the trident, accompanied by a dolphin, Meshorer 1985: no. 85 (Commodus); Kindler 1961: nos. 12b (Commodus), 17b (Caracalla) and 18b (Elagabalus). The type exists in coinage from other coastal cities, like Caesarea and Berytus.

³⁵ *BMC Pal.* nos. 23–28 (Hadrian). ³⁶ Meshorer 1985: no. 86.

³⁷ Kindler 1961: no. 15. For Egyptian types in Palestinian coinage, Bricault 2001: 75–6.

³⁸ *ySanh.* 7.9. Kindler 1961: 30–1, lists Talmudic sources. See Jacobs 1998: 269–72.

³⁹ *BMC Pal.* nos. 1–4 (laurel); 5–11 (palm tree); 12–16 (caduceus); 17–20 (corn). For the palm tree as a national Jewish symbol, see Meshorer 1985: 36, no. 88. See also Chancey 2001.

⁴⁰ Beside the Sixth Legion in Legio, three cohorts were stationed in Sepphoris (until 120), Tiberias and Beth Shean; Safrai 1992.

⁴¹ Meshorer 1985: no. 93; Meyers 1992.

⁴² The great building on the southern side of the *decumanus*, possibly enclosed within a *temenos*, is not clearly identified.

⁴³ *BMC Pal.* nos. 21–8. See Chancey 2006: 166–92.

titles *ἱερά*, *ἄσυλος* καὶ *αὐτόνομος* (holy, inviolable and autonomous), they proclaimed proud membership of the Greek cultural world under a Roman law. However the civic *boule* was inter-ethnic, as we might conclude on the basis of rabbinic and archaeological documents.⁴⁴ Further south, Lydda-Diospolis was another Jewish city, the home of the Patriarch before Tiberias in the third century.⁴⁵ Septimius Severus granted it civic rights during his second stay in Palestine (199/200). Its new name and titles, *Λευκία Σεπτιμία Σεουηρία Διοσπόλις*, proclaimed the patronage both of Zeus and of the emperor.⁴⁶ These titles were similar to what we find in the neighbouring pagan–Jewish city of Eleutheropolis and in the more distant pagan city of Sebaste.⁴⁷ Although it was ruled by Jews,⁴⁸ civic coinage there followed figurative traditions attested to in other Palestinian cities, by borrowing at least models from them, if not engravers, like the neighbouring Antipatris calling for services from the Neapolis workshop.⁴⁹ From 208 to 218, Diospolis' coin types copied those of cities governed by a pagan elite. Beside Zeus, seated on a throne, holding a Victory and leaning on a sceptre, with an eagle at his feet – that is, the city's new name through an image – Tyche is depicted as well, along with her traditional garments (turreted, or her statue standing in a temple, the foot on a river god).⁵⁰ The bust of the empress Julia Domna had a female deity of plenty as a reverse: a veiled Demeter, topped with a *calathus* and holding a torch.⁵¹ Sarapis wearing the *modius* also belonged to the 'club' of protective figures.⁵² These types were regularly minted by cities, as an expression of civic definition within the Hellenised, cultural *koine*, independently of any religious choice. The orthodox rabbis of Diospolis might have considered them as such, when allowing them. One coin type, however, is more astonishing. It features Jupiter Helio-politanus from Baalbek along with his canonical iconography: the god stands between two bulls, holding a whip and a wheat sheaf.⁵³ The type is uncommon in Palestinian coinage, whatever the religion of the local

⁴⁴ Alon 1984: 656–9; Weiss and Netzer 1997: 118–21.

⁴⁵ Alon 1984: 709–19; Schwartz 1991. Its role in reckoning calendar, *ySanh.* 1.2.18cd.

⁴⁶ *BMC Pal.* XXIII. ⁴⁷ Kushnir-Stein 2000.

⁴⁸ A talmudic anecdote reports that, in the time of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (c. 220–50), a Jew pursued by the Romans escaped in Lydda; the Romans threatened to destroy the town, *TJ Terumot* 8.12.46b. Alon 1984: 702.

⁴⁹ Kindler 1987.

⁵⁰ *BMC Pal.* nos. 3 and 4 (in a temple, Caracalla); Meshorer 1985: nos. 153 and 157. See the canonical Tyche type from Antioch, Dohrn 1960: 17–18, no. 10.

⁵¹ Meshorer 1985: no. 156.

⁵² *BMC Pal.* nos. 1–2 (Julia Domna) and 5 (Caracalla); Meshorer 1985: no. 155.

⁵³ Meshorer 1985: no. 154 (Geta).

population. It can be found in the pagan city of Neapolis of Samaria, and in Eleutheropolis and Nicopolis,⁵⁴ two cities next to Diospolis strongly influenced by the army's presence and where pagans were the majority. This unusual type, even more unusual in an orthodox Jewish town, supports in my view the hypothesis about types which were just copied, and which are therefore irrelevant for depicting local religious practices, if taken in isolation, contrary to widespread interpretations.⁵⁵

Reinforcement of Roman power after 136 contributed to spreading Greek images more than 'Roman' ones, even in colonies where the public figurative language indeed borrowed Roman-like types.⁵⁶ In fourth-century Caesarea, a cup with Latin writing was dedicated *Genio coloniae* (to the colonial Genius) figured as a Greek Tyche in Amazonian dress holding the bust of the emperor in her hand.⁵⁷ Cultural hybridity was at its height.

LANGUAGE AS A PARTIAL MARKER

Passing now to the language of words, we come first to the contribution of nomenclature to estimating the impact of Roman rule. Numerous inscriptions attesting to the *tria nomina* are a sure clue to the place of Roman or Romanised people within local cultures and societies. Active or retired soldiers were the first such people in a province unusually full of troops.⁵⁸ And yet their Roman status did not prevent them either from maintaining their own native customs, or from mixing Romanness with provincial Hellenism. This latter is exemplified by a couple in Eleutheropolis. Titus Flavius Valens, once an officer in a cohort, and his wife Julia Valentina, chose the Greek language for their epitaph, a private testimony, and relied on Greek figures (a naked Aphrodite, leaning on the head of an ithyphallic Hermes and flanked by Eros) to accompany them into the afterworld.⁵⁹ If we turn to a quite different milieu and type of evidence, Eusebius in his *History*, written in Greek, gives a list of the bishops of the 'Church of the Gentiles' (ἡ ἐκκλησία ἐξ ἐθνῶν), which flourished in Aelia Capitolina after 135. Although choices of names are not strong enough indicators of involvement in Romanness when information on personal status is lacking, still it is worth noticing that ten of the thirteen

⁵⁴ Friedheim 2002; I do not share his interpretation of the god as 'culte suprême'.

⁵⁵ Belayche 2003b. Contra Meshorer 1985: 55: 'This cult [Demeter] may have been linked with the worship of Zeus-Heliopolites'. See also Lifshitz 1977: 486–7, for 'Les cultes d'Aelia'.

⁵⁶ Belayche 2003a: 165–72. ⁵⁷ Will 1983.

⁵⁸ Twenty-five thousand soldiers, cf. Safrai 1992: 107–10 and Eck and Pangerl 2007.

⁵⁹ Savignac 1903.

bishops had Roman names.⁶⁰ This proportion is rather surprising, the more so as their historicity is vague and because better-attested bishops in the third century all bore Greek names.

The same question may produce more convincing results in the two great Samaritan cities. Neapolis was created as a Greek polis by Vespasian and transformed into a colony in the mid-third century. In the second century, twenty-two seats in the theatre were probably the place for a *collegium*. Their members, for the most part, bore Roman names (Iustus, Iustus Romanus, Marcellus, Priscus, Iulius and Iulianus),⁶¹ but not a complete Roman onomastic formula which might have coined a *conuentus ciuium Romanorum*.⁶² In neighbouring Sebaste, we know of three priests during the period, all writing in Greek. During Herodian times, when the city was a Greek polis, a graffito written in the stadium offers the Latin name of a priest: Pomponios Rufos.⁶³ In 134/5, at a time when Roman influences must have been strengthened by events, the priest of the local temple of Zeus Olympios, embellished by Hadrian, bore a Greek name: Philochares son of Philochares.⁶⁴ Later on (given the absence of chronological data, possibly after the grant of colonial status), another priest, Calpurnianus son of Gaianus, and a Flavia Domittia alike, bear Roman names, whatever their origins.⁶⁵

These testimonies provide three chronological steps, and yet no other indication than an ancient and durable mix, although from the Severans onwards political integration of the provincial population as a whole was encouraged and its juridical integration was accomplished by 212. Jews were allowed to become members of the councils, and thus to hold civic positions.⁶⁶ Jewish *bouleutai* and *strategoi* were numerous from now on.⁶⁷ In the Hammath-Tiberias synagogue, dated to the Tetrarchy (286–320), eight donors offered the mosaic pavement. Greek inscriptions display their names, half of them Latin: Maximus, Iullus, Profuturus and Severus.⁶⁸ The last name is known to have been popular among Jews in Sardis (Asia), for instance, as it honoured the good treatment they had received from the Severan dynasty.⁶⁹ We do not know much about these notables, except

⁶⁰ Eus. *Ecclesiastical History* 5.12.1–2 (Marcus, Cassianus, Publius, Maximus, two Julianus, two Gaius, Capito, Valens). The three non-Roman names are Symmachos, Dolichianos and Narcissos.

⁶¹ *SEG* VIII (1936): nos. 120–30. ⁶² Van Andringa 2003.

⁶³ Crowfoot, Crowfoot and Kenyon 1954: 41 no. 47 and for Latin athletes' names (Primus, Rufus), 40 no. 36.

⁶⁴ *SEG* VIII (1936): no. 97. ⁶⁵ Crowfoot *et al.* 1954: 36 no. 9 and 38 no. 16.

⁶⁶ *Digest* 50.2.3.3: *Eis, qui Iudaicam superstitionem sequuntur, diui Severus et Antoninus honores adipisci permiserunt*.

⁶⁷ See Alon 1977: 458–75 and Avi Yonah 1984: 39–42.

⁶⁸ Dothan 1983: 55–57 and Di Segni 1988. ⁶⁹ Cross 2002: 3–6, no. 1.

that they were disciples (*threptoi*)⁷⁰ of the Nasi/Patriarch, who was himself a member of the imperial establishment, and honoured publicly as *clarissimus*, *spectabilis* or *illustris*.⁷¹ Neither their status as Roman citizens, in common with all the inhabitants of the Empire after 212, nor their Roman names caused a confusion with their Jewish identity.⁷² In a more modest ambience, Qazyon, a rural Jewish community in Upper Galilee, testifies to the spread of honours for emperors outside circles of Roman origin.⁷³ A Jewish dedication in Greek was probably publicised in a pagan temple.⁷⁴ However the text shows two noticeable differences from usual dedications to emperors. The Qazyon community, where the Amora R. Yohanan lived in the third century, paid homage 'for the salvation (ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας)' of Septimius Severus and his two sons, and not for them as if they were divinised. Moreover, they use the usual formula for Jewish inscriptions in Greek (ἐξ εὐχῆς Ἰουδαίων) instead of the Greek votive form (εὐχόμενος).

These few examples coming from diverse religious and cultural groups (pagan, Christian and Jewish) draw attention to the limits of linguistic choices (whether Greek or Latin) as information on active cultural trends. If they can usefully direct us towards juridical identifications, they cannot act as a sufficient marker for the cultural identification of populations, and, consequently, for an appreciation of their degree of participation within Romanness. Latin was the language of administration, army or Roman institutions, 'the language of power' as late as the fifth century.⁷⁵ The many officials who lived in the province, both civilians and present or former soldiers, account for the broad diffusion of Latin in a Greek-speaking context.⁷⁶ Hannah Cotton and Werner Eck were thus recently brought to the important conclusion – although it is still debated – that a veterans' settlement existed in Caesarea Maritima, contrary to the assertion of the *Digest*.⁷⁷ This Roman population was decisive for the use of Latin in the colony up to the fourth century.⁷⁸ And yet, as Eck stressed again in his opening lecture

⁷⁰ Cf. the paper of Mariana Rici in this volume.

⁷¹ *CTh* 16.8.8 (at 392); 8.11 (at 396); 8.13 (at 397); 8.15 (at 404). See Levine 1979: 650–9.

⁷² A similar analysis for the decorative programmes filled with pagan motives in late antique synagogues, Rutgers 1992: 106 and Fine 2005.

⁷³ *CJ* II 972; Roth-Gerson 1987: 125–9 (*non uidi*). ⁷⁴ Fine 1999: 227–9.

⁷⁵ *Lib. Or.* 49.28; Cooley 2002 and Eck 2003. See the paper by Benjamin Isaac in this volume. For the fifth century, Millar 2006: 84–97.

⁷⁶ Almost 200 Latin inscriptions in Caesarea: Lehmann and Holum 2000 and Eck 2007: 157–200. See also Millar 1995: 403–7; Geiger 1996; more extensively Rochette *Latin*: 102–49.

⁷⁷ Cotton and Eck 2002: 381–5; *Digest* 50.15.8.7.

⁷⁸ A similar picture exists in Pisidian Antioch with a brief revival of Latin under the Tetrarchy: Christol and Drew Bear 1999.

at our meeting,⁷⁹ Rome never imposed an imperial language, either in Roman entities or for communicating with provincials, as demonstrated by the existence of an imperial secretary *ab epistulis Graecis*.⁸⁰ There is a good northern parallel in Syrian Antioch where (arousing Libanios' anger) the chair for Latin language was created as late as 356, although the city was raised to colonial status by Septimius Severus.⁸¹ When Neapolis was granted colonial rank by Philip I, the city publicised the honour by minting coins with Latin legends and colonial types, while retaining the Greek types of its local tradition.⁸² Greek language was familiar in all socio-economic and cultural milieux, at least for writing among the middle and upper classes, with the lower classes keeping Aramaic.⁸³ Even an 'orthodox' Jew such as Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi recommended the use of Greek rather than Syriac, if not Hebrew.⁸⁴ Although he was a *conductor saltus Augusti*,⁸⁵ he does not mention Latin, restricted to official contexts ('for war' according to the Talmud)⁸⁶ and transplanted people.⁸⁷ In the third century, Greek spread over inscriptions everywhere in the East, helped by a Latin lexicon written with Greek letters for Roman *realia*.⁸⁸ The fact that it happened precisely at a time when the Constitutio Antoniniana advanced juridical Romanisation⁸⁹ is another clue to the limits of our information from linguistic data. At a late period, Roman institutions in colonies were usually named with Greek words. Scythopolis, granted colony status under the Tetrarchy, had *strategoi*, and in Aelia Capitolina, city magistrates are called 'amphodarchs' in Byzantine sources.⁹⁰ Greek lexicon served from then on to designate 'Roman' *realia*.

⁷⁹ Cf. Werner Eck in this volume. ⁸⁰ Millar 1992: 83–109.

⁸¹ Lib. Or. 38.6 and 58.21–2. ⁸² BMC Pal. nos. 129–47.

⁸³ Cf. the Jewish *necropoleis* of Jaffa and Jerusalem, *CIJ* nos. 901–60 and 1266–84, and Rahmani *Ossuaries*: 13. For papyrological data, Cotton 1999. More generally, Rosén 1980; and Schwartz 1995: 31–5.

⁸⁴ *bBaba Qamma* 82b–83a (Epstein 1935: 470); the *Shema'* in Greek in fourth century Caesarea (*ySotah* 7.1.21b), where Jewish inscriptions are only in Greek; see Levine 1998: 126–30 and 160–2. For translations of juridical contracts from Aramaic into Greek, Cotton 1998: 169–71.

⁸⁵ Levine 1979: 661; Horsley 1995: 183.

⁸⁶ Hadas-Lebel 1979: 216–8. Cf. the triumphal arch honouring Hadrian after the Bar Kokhba War; Eck and Foerster 1999.

⁸⁷ Price 2003.

⁸⁸ Millar 1990: 9 ('a pseudo-Greek word, κóλων', see below n. 92). Greek political notions were written in Latin letters as well, Lehmann and Holm 2000, nos. 10–11 (*metropolis*).

⁸⁹ On the '*pluralisme juridique*' after 212 (*Reichsrecht* and *Volksrechte*), Coriat 1997: 410–8 and Lepelley 2001.

⁹⁰ See Last, Laniado and Porath 1993 (τῶν στρατηγ(ῶν) πόλ(εως) κολ(ωνειῶν)) and *Chronicon Pascale* 119: Hadrian 'divided the city into seven districts (ἀμφοδα). He designated appropriate men as amphodarchs, each of them being assigned a district.'

LANGUAGE IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS

The field of religion also testifies to the imperial bilingualism that veils Rome's impact. At Mount Carmel, on the northern side of the Syria–Palaestina border, a Roman citizen from Caesarea (κόλων Καισαρεύς), G. Iulius Eutychas,⁹¹ demonstrates cultural mixing in a private dedication. His *cognomen* ('fortunate') might be of any Greek origin, in this case probably Syrian, while his juridical status as a *colonus* is transliterated in Greek. He offers the dedication 'to Zeus Heliopolitanus of the Carmel'.⁹² The god's identity could allow us to trace Eutychas' origin back to Berytus or Heliopolis, two Syrian colonies further north, where the divinity held a civic position and was *de iure* a Roman god. One of Eutychas' Caesarean contemporaries (second–third century) dedicated an altar to the god of Doliche under his Greek name (Zeus), although the Latin form Jupiter is more frequent. This Latin-named soldier (Οὐίκτορ, *Victor*) reveals his Roman intimacy, when using a votive formula, uncommon in Greek (ἀνέθηκεν κὲ ἡργάσεται), that actually translates a very common Latin one (*fecit et dedicavit*).⁹³ We may add to these testimonies from Romans in Greek a monumental parallel of the Roman impact in the *caput Palaestinae*: the *mithraeum*. At first glance, this building might sound non-Roman, since Mithraism has been registered as an 'oriental cult' from Franz Cumont onwards.⁹⁴ The shrine is an *unicum* in the province,⁹⁵ at least up to now; other evidence is uncertain or has a dubious origin.⁹⁶ This singularity somehow vanishes when the *mithraeum* is related to the administrative function of the city. As all over the Empire, devotion to Mithraism is found principally among civil and military officials. This social diffusion accounts for the location of sanctuaries around *castra* and public buildings, as Filippo Coarelli demonstrated for the city of Rome.⁹⁷ While the cult relied on private religious choice, it was known to – if not encouraged by – state authorities. In Caesarea Maritima, the sacred grotto was built within the foundations of an administrative (municipal, later procuratorial)⁹⁸ building; it lies beneath an official portico, paved and decorated under the Severans, and displaying honorific inscriptional

⁹¹ SEG XIV (1957): 832.

⁹² Avi Yonah 1952: 118–9 and 1959; Hajjar 1977: I, no. 227; and Millar *Roman Near East*: 269–70.

⁹³ CCID no. 30. ⁹⁴ For recent revisitation of the concept, see Bonnet 2006.

⁹⁵ On the coast, Sidon (a Roman colony too) houses the nearest *mithraeum*, CIMRM I 73–6, nos. 74–87. See 'Mithra au Proche-Orient' 2001 [2004].

⁹⁶ Magness 2003; de Jong 1998; Gordon 2001 [2004]: 100–6.

⁹⁷ Coarelli 1979: 79 and Clauss 1992: 261–6. ⁹⁸ Eck 2003.

homages.⁹⁹ The topographical coincidence makes clear a relationship between the *mithraeum* and imperial personnel. This *mithraeum* adds a new piece to the puzzle of Mithraism's Romanness,¹⁰⁰ and confirms by the same token that Roman religious practices were practices of Romans.

In other cases, one might be tempted to overestimate the impact of Rome when reading Latin language documents. According to the well-known process of *interpretatio*, sources could give Latin names to local divinities, who were actually Greek or Hellenised. In the *Vita Hilarionis* (16), when Jerome mentions a feast *in templum Veneris* at Elusa, a town peopled by Saracens, he recalls, under the Latin name of the goddess, a local cult of an 'Aphrodite', who is herself a Greek interpretation of the Nabatean Allat (the Alilat of Herodotus).¹⁰¹ This parallel helps us to decipher the confused identity of Venus/Aphrodite that Greek or Latin authors report as honoured on Golgotha at Aelia Capitolina. I have argued elsewhere that, in my opinion, the deity was probably a local Tyche dressed as an Astarte with civic functions when figured on coins, notwithstanding her Latin or Greek name in our sources.¹⁰²

Such processes of assimilation through names, giving a foreign – but understandable – denomination to local deities, are valid for rituals as well. Two feasts in Gaza and Scythopolis were given Roman names by literary sources.¹⁰³ Both cities were raised to colonial status at a late period (the end of the third century). And yet Gaza's cultural identity did not change, nor its linguistic habit. When framed within Roman institutions, its pantheon remained Greek or Hellenised.¹⁰⁴ Alongside a Greek-type festival founded in 130 to honour Hadrian, we know of another feast that betrays the durable impact of Rome. In the *Life of Hilarion*, the first Palestinian monk, Jerome reports a chariot race he calls Consualia.¹⁰⁵ The feast (a race for unbridled and harnessed horses) belongs to Roman public rituals,¹⁰⁶ but it is no longer recorded in the Calendar of 354.¹⁰⁷ Devotion

⁹⁹ Blakely 1987. The *mithraeum* was set in a former *horreum*, thus the finds of first-century ceramics. The early date (Domitian) selected by Beck 1998: 118 (followed by Gordon 2001 [2004]: 81) after these finds is implausible.

¹⁰⁰ Beck 1996: 177–8. Painter 2000. ¹⁰¹ Hdt. 1.131.

¹⁰² Belayche 1997 and 2001: 149–54.

¹⁰³ See Belayche 2003a: 175–8 and Belayche 2004.

¹⁰⁴ Marcus Diaconus, *Life of Porphyrius* 64.4–7: 'eight public temples for the idols' (Helios, Aphrodite, Apollo, Kore, Hecate, the *Heroeion*, the *Tychaeon* and the *Marneion*). Zeus Marnas was a local god of Philistine origin, whose features had been mixed for a long time with features borrowed from a Cretan Zeus.

¹⁰⁵ Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 11.4–11, with no indication of date.

¹⁰⁶ It took place at the underground altar of the Circus Maximus, on 21 August and 15 December, Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.31.2. See Dumézil 1980: 289–304.

¹⁰⁷ Salzman 1990. *Contra* Jerome (above n. 105), writing that the Consualia tradition was preserved *in Romanis urbibus*.

to Consus might have attracted Gazan farmers who were active members of the civic elite; but they took the part of their *theos patrios* Marnas, who filled a similar agrarian function, being 'the Lord of rains'. Though it is always possible within a polytheistic system that a divine field is duplicated, it is more plausible that the Jerusalemite monk gave a Roman name to a Marnas feast, whose rituals were comparable to that of Consualia, in order to be better understood by his western, Latin-speaking readers.¹⁰⁸ The chariot race episode has a great share in the apologetic project of hagiography: the Christian pilot's victory is hailed by the audience as demonstrating the victory of Christ over Marnas, and not over Consus.¹⁰⁹ A Talmudic treatise relates a similar, though less obvious case, for Scythopolis. Roman presence around the city is well recorded during the second century;¹¹⁰ but it did not have significant impact on the cults of the city, where Dionysos was prominent as *ktistes* and *kyrios*.¹¹¹ The city was raised to colonial status at the end of the third century. Can this explain a talmudic assertion about performance of the Saturnalia there?¹¹² The traditional December (17–23) festival was indeed still performed at a late period, unlike the Consualia.¹¹³ These festive days were very typical for inversion rituals, and they worked in the past as a national, 'identitarian' time for Romans who were abroad.¹¹⁴ The talmudic treatise *Avodah Zarah* says nothing about festive proceedings, except that the festival coincided with a fair.¹¹⁵ This isolated, and late, mention of Saturnalia in Scythopolis raises a question, for the few other talmudic references to Saturnalia always occur within a list of public feasts. The festival stands in the second rank on the list, between the January *Calendae* and festivities of the imperial cult, and before private rituals that close the list. Therefore the list looks like a sort of typology of pagan feasts, ordered according to their degree of defilement.¹¹⁶ In searching for the Roman (or

¹⁰⁸ He stressed the etymological exegesis of the god's name and the mythographic tradition that related the rape of the Sabines and the Consualia. Jerome, *V. Hilar.* 11.4.

¹⁰⁹ Jerome, *V. Hilar.* 11.11: *ethnici quoque ipsi concreparent: Marnas victus est a Christo.*

¹¹⁰ Cf. two cuirassed statues of Hadrian (Foerster 1985) and a triumphal arch (Eck and Foerster 1999).

¹¹¹ Di Segni, Foerster and Tsafirir 1996.

¹¹² *jAv. Zar.* 1.2 (39c); Lifshitz 1977: 276; Goodman 1983: 48. ¹¹³ Duval 1977.

¹¹⁴ *DAGR* IV.2, s.v. 'Saturnalia' (Hild), 1080–2; Roscher, *Lexikon* IV (1909–1915), s.v. 'Saturnus', 436–40.

¹¹⁵ Commercial fairs and religious festivals are often connected, MacMullen 1970 and Debord 1982: 11–7.

¹¹⁶ References for Roman feasts attested in Talmudic sources in Krauss 1910–12: 122–7. For the historical value of these texts, Veltri 2000: 105 and 123–6. Friedheim 2006: 363–4, finds in the list two common features: their connection with the imperial cult and the place of games.

non-Roman) nature of the festival, the paucity of our information¹¹⁷ and the talmudic habit of addressing pagan realities through generic terms¹¹⁸ make one surmise that the term Saturnalia stands here for a generic celebration, and is intended to condemn a local festival – of which there were so many – for loose behaviour, by definition impure for rabbis, perhaps occurring in winter.

ROMAN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES – PRACTICES OF ROMANS

Evidence for Roman religious practices is mainly evidence for practices performed by Romans,¹¹⁹ a fact which demonstrates that the cultural graft of Romanness did not go further than a formal expression. In Jerusalem, Roman public rituals followed Titus' victory. While hailed as *imperator*, he performed a sacrifice to the standards in the courtyard of the burning Temple, and then a thanksgiving ceremony organised along the three sequences of public rites: sacrifice, ritual meal and games.¹²⁰

In this context, soldiers played a dynamic role in spreading their habits as they spread out over the province. Besides the elements of material culture (roads, aqueducts, theatres, amphitheatres) that the army diffused,¹²¹ it brought in practices of the institution¹²² and of individuals alike. On the north-west border of the province, the Claudian colony of Ptolemais gives an insight into the potential cultural and religious influence of veterans. A first-century inscription discovered near Kfar Ata is dedicated to the personification of the *pagus* (*pago vicinal(i)*), the Roman term for a rural territory.¹²³ The Talmud indirectly echoes religious performances of military life: when 'a band of gentile [raiders] ... entered a town ... in wartime', open and closed jars 'are permitted because there is no time for offering libation'.¹²⁴ Libation ceremonies are attested on a

¹¹⁷ Apart from the date, 'la "Gemara" ... demeure quasiment muette pour tout ce qui touche aux Saturnales', Hadas-Lebel 1979: 430; Vana 1996: 356–60. Lifshitz' argument (1977: 276: the 'material' recalls ritual *mappae* known from Martial), is not sufficient, because Scythopolis was famous for its material manufactures, *Expositio totius mundi* 31 (Rougé: 164).

¹¹⁸ Cf. generic names for pagan gods (Merkulis and Pene Ba'al), *M. Sanh.* 7. 6; see Krauss 1898: 'Mercurius', 353–4 and Vana 1996: 504–7. *bSanh.* 40b (Steinsaltz: 205) lists a range of standard rituals (immolation, censuring, libations, supplications) which are not specific to any god; contra Friedheim 2006: 236–7.

¹¹⁹ See for instance a dedication offered by an Aemilius to *Silvanus sanctus* in Legio, see Eck and Tepper 2001.

¹²⁰ *Jos. BJ* 6. 316 and 7. 16–17.

¹²¹ Cf. *bShabbat* 33b: Rabbi Judah b. Ilai (c. 140–65) said: Romans 'have made streets, they have built bridges, they have erected baths'. For Syria overall, see Pollard *Soldiers*: 171–250.

¹²² See a dedication *Sancto Genio frumentariorum* in the Caesarean governor's palace, Cotton and Eck 2001: 234–5.

¹²³ Avi Yonah 1946: 86–7, no. 3 and pl. 26 no. 3. ¹²⁴ *M. Av. Zar.* 5.6.

Caesarean relief;¹²⁵ they are documented in Legio as well, where a small *patera* with an effigy of the bearded Pan, of Italian or Gallic manufacture, may have belonged to a soldier.¹²⁶ Another one showing a ram's head was manufactured in the East and happened to pass to a Bar Kokhba fighter.¹²⁷ Soldiers retained their ancestral traditions, such as funerary practices. Excavated remains of cremation – forbidden by rabbis – all come from Roman military places: two *castra* (Legio and Aelia Capitolina) and Mampsis-Kurnub, a military post on the road to Aila, settled in a Nabataean foundation.¹²⁸ The *Dis manibus* inscriptions leave no doubt as to the identity of the deceased: a member of the cohorts I Augusta Thracum equitata and a centurion from the legio III Cyrenaica.¹²⁹ At Sebaste, a Greek city but peopled by Herodian veterans, cremation was practised in the second century as well.¹³⁰

The army played an active part in the spread of Roman games. The Eleutheropolis amphitheatre was originally built for military training and was in use until the mid-fourth century.¹³¹ It housed traditional games and spectacles, gladiator fights and *venationes*.¹³² But the artefacts brought to light from its *sacellum* (two altars, three bronze curse tablets engaging magical help during competitions, more than 200 ritual oil-lamps of the Beit Nattif type)¹³³ attest to practices that were regular throughout the Empire. One of the two altars excavated in the 'chapel' paid homage to the emperor through the devotional act of a native believer towards a god of Syrian origin: 'Elk(ias?) for the salvation (ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας) of the lord Commodus, to the god of Heliopolis (θεῷ Ἡλιοπολείτη)'. M. Avi Yonah rightly considered gladiatorial games 'one of the most powerful agencies for the penetration of Roman influence among the lower classes'.¹³⁴ Graffiti of gladiators or gladiatorial fighting have been found

¹²⁵ *Scavi di Caesarea maritima*, no. 1 and fig. 239 at p. 194. ¹²⁶ Rahmani 1981.

¹²⁷ Yadin *Bar-Kokhba*: 104–7. Its centre is adorned with a beautiful representation of Thetis astride the centaur, bringing the arms to Achilles.

¹²⁸ Tsuk 1988–9: 96; Hershkovitz 1988–9: 98–100; Negev 1971. In Abila of the Decapolis, remains of food offerings, *NEAEHL*: 1, art. 'Abila', 3.

¹²⁹ Negev 1968: 412–3; Sartre 1982: 37. The *cohors I Augusta Thracum equitata* was stationed in Palestine in the first half of the second century, Mann 1969.

¹³⁰ Crowfoot, Kenyon and Sukenik 1942: 90; Crowfoot, Crowfoot and Kenyon 1954: 435, no. C 1034.

¹³¹ Dagan, Fischer and Tsafrir 1985. Its *cavea* is that of the *amphitheatrum castrense*, Kloner and Hübsch 1996. More generally, Golvin 1988: 154–6.

¹³² *Caesarea maritima* had a *procurator munerum et ludorum* as early as the reign of Nero, Hamburger 1986: 191 no. 47.

¹³³ Kloner and Hübsch 1996: 94 (plan) and 101.

¹³⁴ Avi Yonah 1942: 135; Millar *Roman Near East*, *passim*. Cf. Roman games offered by Titus after his victory in Caesarea Maritima and Caesarea Philippi, Jos. *Bj* 7, 23–24 and 37. *M. Av. Zar.* 1, 7 forbids selling of bears and lions, for they were to come to circus games; on condemnation of

even in Jewish tombs,¹³⁵ but they only betray the generalisation of entertainment with no necessary correlative religious impact.

Unsurprisingly, testimonies to the cult of Jupiter Optimus Maximus come only from Roman societies, either in colonies like Aelia Capitolina,¹³⁶ or within military units. A Sebaste dedication (*sacrum fecerunt*), offered probably during the 'Bar Kokhba' war,¹³⁷ was addressed to the Roman god by a *vexillatio* of an Upper Pannonian cohort, *cives Siscii, Varcian(i) et Latobici*.¹³⁸ Two decades earlier, another *vexillatio* (of the legio IIIa Cyrenaica) made a dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Sarapis (*Iovi O M Sarapidi*) when posted in Jerusalem.¹³⁹ Although the military presence was dense and durable, devotions to the national god are very few, even in colonies, where Hellenised local gods kept their prominent rank (in Neapolis, Zeus Olympios of the Garizim; in Gaza, Zeus Marnas; in Scythopolis, Dionysos; probably Kore in Sebaste).

CONCLUSION

Targeting the impact of Rome on Palestinian religious life through the many 'languages' able to express it (words, images, practices, religious representations) is a way to incarnate a historical situation whose broad frame is delineated by juridical and political lines. In the very late second century, a passage in the *Apologeticum* by Tertullian sketches the limits of an approach that can be no more than institutional for analysing cultural and religious evolutions in a province of the Empire:

Each province and each city has its god, Syria has Atargatis, Arabia Dushara... As far as I know these provinces I have just mentioned are Roman (*Romanas, ut opinor, provincias edidi*), but for all that, their gods are not Roman gods (*nec tamen Romani dei earum*), because they are no more venerated in Rome than

theatre and circus games as devoted to idols, *bAv. Zar.* 18b. See Krauss 1910–12: III, 114–21 and Jacobs 1998.

¹³⁵ At Beth She'arim, catacomb 4 (Mazar 1973: pl. 36, 3) and in a burial cave at Tel 'Eitun, Judaea (Tzaferis 1982). For games buildings around the province, Weiss 1999.

¹³⁶ Belayche 2003a: 170–1 (with bibliography).

¹³⁷ Vincent, 1909: 441–5, argued for Pannonian troops who sided with Septimius Severus in 195 or 199/200.

¹³⁸ Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924: 20 no. 30. Alföldi 1968: 63; Alon 1984: 606.

¹³⁹ *CIL* III 13587 = *RICIS* 403/801. The inscription was found on Mount Zion to the south of the legion's camp (near today's Zion Gate). This army detachment was accustomed to the Alexandrian religious *realia*. The legio IIIa Cyrenaica was stationed in Alexandria from the time of Augustus on and supported Titus in 70 during the siege of Jerusalem; *RE* XII 1–2 (1924–5), 'Legio' (Ritterling), 1291–2 and 1506–13.

those who, in Italia, are consecrated as gods by the means of a municipal decision ... (*quia Romae non magis coluntur quam ...*).¹⁴⁰

Although confusing the ethnic identity of a god and his juridical status, the Latin Father grasped perfectly that the definition of a god as Roman is not a recognition of his cultural profile, but of the place where he is worshipped and, therefore, of his juridical status. Therefore, we can understand why the settlement of a Roman order in Judaea-Palaestina did not mark a significant break in the local religious evolution, or leave long-lasting effects, the development of homages towards the emperor being in the line of Herodian creations; relationships between religious movements inside Judaism had a much stronger destiny. Until the Severans, there were only two Roman colonies (Caesarea and Aelia Capitolina) that could represent 'small Romes'.¹⁴¹ Since colonial laws left a large degree of autonomy to local choices (for the calendar, the gods, the type of festivities, etc.),¹⁴² local religious life could maintain pre-Roman traditions, generally Greek or Hellenised, within the Roman juridical canvas. This was the case in Caesarea. The colony had a Roman religious structure, but the scant religious evidence reveals a very light impact of Rome on the types of gods who were honoured in the city, beyond the imperial worship symbolised by the temple of Roma and Augustus that Herod had built. The religious image that the city wanted to publicise was not a Roman one, although it was the seat of the governor: this is shown on a reverse from the reign of Traianus Decius, whose legend is in Latin, but that displays a Semitic-like altar topped with two sacred trees.¹⁴³ Later on Neapolis, granted colony status in the middle of the third century, integrated the god of the Garizim in the public pantheon probably without any change. For the province as a whole, the Roman religious features I have tried to list are clearly related to the occasional or more permanent presence of a Roman establishment, whether civilian or military.

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¹⁴⁰ Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 24, 8.

¹⁴¹ A. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 16.13.9: *effigies parvae simulacraque populi Romani*.

¹⁴² Crawford 1996: no. 25, chapters 64–72, *passim* and Rüpke 2006.

¹⁴³ Meshorer 1985: no. 34.

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CHAPTER 8

The epigraphic habit and the Jewish diasporas of Asia Minor and Syria

Walter Ameling

The Jewish diaspora of Asia Minor, one of the most vital centres of Jewish diaspora life in antiquity, has left us many testimonies of its life: material remains, ranging from synagogue buildings to lamps; written sources, both pagan and Christian; and, of course, inscriptions. The evidence of inscriptions has the distinct advantage of having been written for and by the Jews of Asia Minor themselves: we are looking not through the eyes of foreign observers, but through their own eyes – even if they adapted themselves to their surroundings and joined the world of epigraphy, the world of communication established by the Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor.¹ Even if we know only about 250 Jewish inscriptions, their distribution in time and place corresponds perfectly with that of inscribed texts in general.² The Jewish inscriptions can therefore be seen as media of communication both with the outside world and within the community (sections on ‘The epigraphic habit’ and ‘The use of different kinds of inscriptions’); if pagans, Christians and Jews used, in part, the same language and the same means of expression, we shall have to look at the consequences for identity in the Jewish diaspora: to what extent did the Jews accept local identities (section on ‘Local Identities’)? Of course, there were always differences among religious identities, but were these differences strong enough to overcome the similarities which grew out

¹ For the Jewish inscriptions of Asia Minor, see *IJudOr* II; numbers in the text refer to inscriptions in this collection. I dispense with footnotes and literature in the first part of this paper, because the necessary references can be found in the commentaries of *IJudOr* II. ‘Syr’ with a following number refers to the inscriptions from the Syrian diaspora in *IJudOr* III.

² Mostly from the first to the sixth century CE with a strong emphasis on the second through to fifth centuries; Phrygia, Lydia and Ionia are most prominent, and in cities like Hierapolis in Phrygia and Corycus in Cilicia we are able to observe a large set of texts inscribed at the same time, the high Empire and late antiquity respectively. The small number of Hellenistic inscriptions may indicate a smaller number of Jews during the second and first century BCE rather than a lesser degree of interaction between Jews and the local communities.

of living together in the cities and in the countryside of Asia Minor, and sharing the same social and local conditions ('Religious Identities')?

The ability to use the same words for the diaspora in Asia Minor and in Syria suggests (at first glance) that circumstances were almost identical. This is not necessarily true, however, and after a short summary of our results in Asia Minor ('The end of the epigraphic habit in Asia Minor'), I shall try to take a look at the epigraphic habit of the Syrian diaspora ('The epigraphic habit in Syria'), not only for comparison, but also to get some impression of the limits of using the epigraphic habit as a means of historical interpretation.

THE EPIGRAPHIC HABIT³

If we are to compare the epigraphy of the Jewish diaspora in Asia Minor with the local epigraphic habit, we have to start with a general remark: changes in the local epigraphic habits – not only generally in Asia Minor, but also in its different parts, Ionia, Phrygia and so on – were the result of changing social and political conditions. If the epigraphic habit of the Jewish communities changed in the same way as did the local habit, then the Jews were necessarily part of the local society and were affected by its different developments. Generally speaking, this must be true: different diasporas have been assumed for some time in Jewish studies, and we may presume without any difficulty that these differences arose from different local conditions: Jewish life in Rome was different from and shaped by different circumstances from Jewish life in third-century Akmoneia or fifth-century Aphrodisias. But to talk about the epigraphic habit of Jewish inscriptions is only possible if they are considered as a whole, as a corpus. Three objections against such a procedure might be possible:

1. Most of the texts from Asia Minor are sepulchral inscriptions, which are thought to be quite uniform – but wrongly: even in this category the differences between local diasporas are quite noticeable. Inscriptions are meant to be seen and read by other persons and groups, and in the case of Jewish inscriptions two different approaches are possible: either the graves (and their inscriptions) were intended to communicate with a non-Jewish public, or they addressed more specifically the 'in-group'. The sepulchral inscriptions from Beth She'arim, Rome and Venosa, for instance, address a more restricted public than the ones from Hierapolis (187–209) or Corycos (232–43). The form of inscriptions is clearly determined by the intended audience, and can be interpreted as a kind of epigraphic habit.

³ The notion of 'epigraphic habit' was introduced by MacMullen 1982; it is widely used today.

2. But is not the epigraphic evidence itself biased? Since inscriptions are part of the material and social culture, the decision to erect an inscription is necessarily a concession to this culture. Do we know only about those Jews who were comfortable with such a concession? To be sure, certain phenomena left no traces in our epigraphic evidence: intermarriage between Jews and pagans (cf. Acts 16:3), the Jew who turned away from the religion of his fathers, and the gentile sympathiser who lost his interest in Judaism after a few months or years. All these phenomena existed, but we can only guess at their respective numbers – and any estimate depends on our preconceptions about pagan interest in Judaism and about the Jews' fidelity to the tradition of their forefathers. It may be noted in passing that these cases contributed in a not unimportant way to first-hand knowledge of Judaism. They must have been more common than we imagine.

Another group which left no trace in the epigraphic evidence consists of Jews who rejected inscriptions as a symbol of pagan culture, who wanted to preserve their separation and distance (as did the early Christians, who are not epigraphically prominent at all). They cannot have been very numerous since they were not noticed as a group in pagan or Jewish literature, and we have no evidence that they used different forms of symbolic representation sanctioned by Jewish tradition, for instance in a synagogue setting.

Inscriptions on stone, even small ones, are expensive, and therefore the humbler members of society had no money to spend on them. Did only the higher strata of Jewish society adopt Greek culture and language? Once again we have to stress that there is no evidence for a distinction between the diaspora communities along the lines of language, acculturation or habit. The inscriptions may not be representative, and they may not stem from the lower ranks of society,⁴ but they are valuable evidence for the acceptance of Hellenism. This Hellenism was not only the culture of the educated, but also an everyday Hellenism: every statement published on stone is a proof of Hellenisation, even those with faulty grammar. The Jewish inscriptions from Asia Minor provide evidence, if such was necessary, that the Jews adopted the language of

⁴ Even if we accept that the mention of communal functions as an indicator of status in the Jewish society is relatively rare, the number of *presbyteroi* etc., who decided to put up inscriptions exaggerates their numerical representation in the community. Even if we believe that the approximately 100 inscriptions from the Sardis synagogue (60–145), with their two or three magistrates (63 (a priest); 118; 141), give a fairer sample of the composition of the local congregation, we have to remember that the donors necessarily represent only the rich and reasonably well-to-do.

their Greco-Roman surroundings. Their language reflects every linguistic change which the Greek language underwent during the Roman Empire and late antiquity,⁵ both in the language of the upper class and in the idioms of the (relatively) lower classes.

3. Inscriptions offer no straightforward factual record of the past: their meaning was determined by appearance and material context. Even in a predominantly illiterate society they found their place among the strategies and practices which were part of social reality – inscriptions were used as a means to convey one's own version of one's own position in society. If you wanted to be understood, you had to use the same language, signs and symbols used in the epigraphy of your milieu and region. The facts recorded by inscriptions had to correspond to the standard practice, and the manner of their recording had to comply with habit, too. That meant first of all that a person had to have the technical knowledge to understand the texts composed by others in his area – and the technical knowledge to compose his own texts. Ignorant and illiterate people who had money and wanted to be remembered in an inscription could order one from a literate mason: but even they had to control the mason and his work in some way – otherwise their ruse would have been in vain.

The use of epigraphy as a medium of communication implied the intention to communicate and the command of the necessary symbols. This last objection against an interpretation of the diaspora inscriptions as a coherent corpus is actually an argument in favour of it: of course, inscriptions present only a limited, biased picture of society, but they reveal what aspects of themselves people wanted to emphasise, which is in itself interesting enough.

THE USE OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF INSCRIPTIONS

Jewish inscriptions can be divided into public and private inscriptions, but basically we have to talk about five groups: 1. texts found in the surrounding community but not represented by parallels in the Jewish corpus; 2. epitaphs; 3. votive offerings; 4. texts reporting some act by the Jewish community, mainly the conferment of honours; 5. inscriptions and writing on perishable materials.

1. Let us start with the differences in epigraphic behaviour between the Jewish communities and the poleis. In the synagogues there are no

⁵ This seems to me an important proof of continuous, day-to-day contact with the non-Jewish population.

treaties inscribed, no letters by emperors and provincial governors, no decrees of the polis dealing with the Jewish communities. Such documents existed and circulated, but it seems that neither the city nor the Jews decided to publish them on stone. Jewish relations with the cities and (for example) the Empire were not considered important enough – even if some of the documents might prove the Jewish communities to be acknowledged and accepted members of the larger political body. While this is difficult to explain, it is at least clear why there are no statutes or *leges sacrae*: the πάτριον νόμος was the *lex sacra* of Judaism κατ' ἔξοχην, and they were not published on stone, but preserved in the Torah shrine. Of course there must have been other statutes regulating fees, opening times, the magistrates' responsibilities, but they were insignificant in comparison with the πάτριον νόμος, and nobody saw any reason to put them on stone.

2. Easily the most common category of inscriptions in the whole of Asia Minor is epitaphs,⁶ written either by the deceased or by a relative. The texts vary considerably, and the monuments themselves had very different forms. To give some examples: altars are used as grave markers, and we could start to worry about the theological implications of this if the altar was not the common local form for a σῆμα. The grave monuments of the Jews are described with exactly the same expressions that are used to describe the graves of the pagans: βωμός, ἐνσόριον, σορός, μνημόρια, ἡρώων etc. The same workshops were used by Jews and pagans, and it is even possible to ascertain the origin of Jewish 'pierres errantes' by comparing them with other stones of the same series. Local formulas were used to indicate the people to be buried in a sarcophagus.⁷ Local deterrents were used as well: Phrygia was famous for its curses, and only in Phrygia did the Jews use curses to prevent the unauthorised use of a grave. They changed the curse and introduced the 'curses of Deuteronomy' or the 'wrath of god' (172–8), which is interesting in itself, showing that at least this part of Jewish identity was sufficiently well known to the general public: the author had to be confident of the power of the curse and,

⁶ Unlike the Romans, the Greeks produced relatively few inscriptions for *paides aoroi*, which is one of the reasons why there are far more Latin inscriptions than Greek. The Jews followed the Greek habit: our sample of sepulchral inscriptions is heavily biased towards the adult.

⁷ To give just one example from Termessus (216): a father decreed that his daughter, a *Ioudaia*, should be buried alone in the sarcophagus (μόνη). This was taken as proof of alienation from her family, brought about by conversion to Judaism. Things look different when we realise that μόνη is used several dozen times on the sarcophagi from Termessos: it was the local way to prohibit strangers from using the sarcophagus.

more important, had to believe that it would frighten potential wrong-doers – and those wrong-doers included pagans and Christians.⁸

Finally, we have to remember that there were no exclusively Jewish cemeteries in Asia Minor: strolling through the *necropoleis* of Hierapolis or Corycos, one would not find many differences between the Jewish and the pagan graves of the third century or between the Jewish and the Christian graves of late antiquity.⁹ In late antiquity, places for communal burial (of poor members?) became quite common (the most famous example is 14, Aphrodisias); this custom may have been inspired by similar Christian practices.¹⁰

3. It is a universal aim of religious language to represent man's relation to God or to the gods through prayers, offerings, donations and the assumption of an office: every pagan sanctuary furnishes ample documentation of this. Leaving an inscribed record of one's relation to the gods was a means of permanently claiming one's own adherence to the religious community. It is not surprising, then, that the so-called *inscriptions iudaicae* contain almost no text from a professed pagan. In only a few cases is pagan generosity recorded by Jews, in an attempt to bring a prominent civic figure into the circle of the synagogue.¹¹

Jewish votive offerings have to be compared with both pagan and Christian offerings. The texts are mostly private, and even if an official acted as dedicator, he did not act in his official capacity (*summae honorariae* are used only for the community). The relation to God was a private matter; it did not derive from the obligations of office.

The possible comparisons with pagan and Christian practices concern the structural elements of a votive offering: similar vocabulary stresses the religious motivation of the donation (εὐχή, for instance,¹² or ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας) and highlights the similarity of the acts performed (σκούτλωσις, κεντεῖν, καλλιεργεῖν). Known votive offerings include

⁸ One Phrygian Jew inscribed a curse on his gravestone in Rome (178): the Phrygian customs were sufficiently established for him to use them in a completely different context.

⁹ One difference between the cemeteries in Hierapolis (second/third century) and Corycos (fourth/sixth century) deserves to be mentioned. We know of some *presbyteroi* in Corycos, but of no holder of communal office in Hierapolis: clearly most of the dead in Hierapolis thought that their holding of a Jewish office was not information to be transmitted to the local reader of the texts (it is not without good reason that most of the community titles known to us stem from the closed cemeteries of Rome, Venosa and so on). In the Corycos inscriptions of late antiquity it was more acceptable to name the religious office, perhaps because the Christians had started this custom.

¹⁰ There were many mixed cemeteries in late antiquity; see, e.g. Ambros. *PL* 16.353 (Milan).

¹¹ Even the long list of sympathisers in Aphrodisias (14) asserts that Jewish influence was not confined to the members of the Jewish community.

¹² The use of εὐχή establishes that an interaction with God was seen as an evident possibility; cf. for the same use by pagans Schörner 2003: 14.

the building or repair of synagogues or parts of synagogues; donations were used for the decoration of the building, for marble coverings of the walls, mosaics on the floor, menoroth or Torah shrines, etc. – very much like work done in churches.

The different religious communities had to care for their buildings and equipment,¹³ and comparable social situations are evident in the fact that a sizable membership was necessary to build or adorn a church or a synagogue: the individual ‘big spender’ vanished from the cities during the fourth century. He was sometimes replaced by the emperor or some government officials, but we have no certain instance of any pagan or Christian official in late antiquity who gave money to a synagogue; the same holds true for civic magistrates or the polis at large – and not only in late antiquity. While the polis commonly took part in the financing of religious life, it is one of the strongest indicators of Jewish isolation that the cities lacked interest in the Jews’ cult and in its organisation: there was no public participation by the magistrates, nor is the contribution of public funds in evidence.

There are other differences, too: there were no Jewish sacrifices or sacrificial altars.¹⁴ None of the offerings purports to be a gift to God: that would have been too much like a sacrifice. Some inscriptions proclaim that the means used to finance an offering are themselves gifts of God to man – the money was not given ἐκ τῶν ιδίων, but ἐκ τῶν δωρεῶν τοῦ θεοῦ (19; 71; 90 etc.). The Christian τὰ σὰ ἐκ τῶν σῶν προσφέρομεν represents the same idea – but the formula was not used by Jews because of the latent idea of a sacrifice to God.¹⁵ It is also very difficult to show the Jewish character of inscriptions addressing God or a god directly;¹⁶ at the very best we may be able to show that they are influenced by Jewish thought. It seems therefore that the Jews thought their god to be too exalted to be addressed publicly in such a manner.

Other cults and associations presented themselves differently, and the reason for these differences can be grasped quite easily: votive inscriptions and other texts relating to the Jews’ beliefs were not designed to be read by the whole population of a city, but to be seen and appreciated solely

¹³ We have no evidence for the financing of festivals or other religious ceremonies by individual members of the community; we do know of communal funds, but not how they were established and maintained (members’ fees?).

¹⁴ There is one enigmatic inscription reading τὸ θυσιαστήριον (31).

¹⁵ There are pagan examples of this notion, but they are quite rare – προσφορά (147) is used differently.

¹⁶ θεῷ ἀνεικήτω Ἀσβαμεῖ 149, 1; θεῷ ἀψευδεῖ καὶ ἀχειροποιήτω 218, 1; θεῷ ἐπηκόω 19, 1; θεῷ ὑψίστῳ καὶ ἀγείᾳ καταφυγῇ 215, 1.

by Jews and by people interested in Judaism. Their stones had no public place in the polis, but had to be incorporated into the complex of the synagogue. There is no dialogue with the public, but only an inwardly directed behaviour and a certain kind of self-assertion. With these differences in mind, we shall take a look at our next category.

4. There are some 'public' inscriptions, decrees by Jewish communities and honorary inscriptions which presuppose the honorary decree of the polis; golden crowns, *προεδρία* and other honours are conferred on people who had served the synagogue well. The magistrates who ran the synagogue had their exact parallels in the magistrates of the poleis and its associations (including the *διὰ βίου*, who established a foundation to finance the expenses of a certain office for all eternity). The Jews are usually thought to have imitated the customs of the polis, but it would be more correct to remark that they imitated the customs of religious and professional associations, which in turn imitated the customs of the polis. The Jewish 'public inscriptions' seem to have no local peculiarities, but all of them belonged to the synagogue and its vicinity, not to the polis at large. It is therefore quite significant that even in this environment the non-religious inscribed acts were designed to resemble the pagan model.

5. The inscriptions we have looked at were made to last and to preserve the memory of the persons or their acts. There were also, of course, texts on perishable material, made for the needs of daily life.¹⁷ Except for some graffiti and seals (e.g. 55; 57–9), they are all lost and have left only traces in our evidence. To list some of the possibilities:

- the communities possessed documentary evidence on their status in the poleis and copies of the edicts and letters of Roman magistrates, as cited by Josephus;¹⁸
- such documents must have been preserved in communal archives; just like pagan archives the Jewish communities' archives were used to deposit testaments and other private papers,¹⁹ but there were also some other documents to deposit:
- lists of members, essentially for the payment of the Ἰουδαϊκὸν τέλοςμα (and other matters);

¹⁷ *CPJ* and *PPolitIud* give examples of the kind of documents to be expected.

¹⁸ Those documents, dating to the civil wars and the first years of Augustus, imply tensions – both within the cities and consequently between cities and Jews. Most interesting is Gelzer's suggestion that the Jewish communities used the growing venality (and need for financial resources) of Roman magistrates to secure their rights (Gelzer 1960: 226, n. 252).

¹⁹ 205 records the fee for a violation of the grave; usually the Jews seem to have used the local archives for the same purpose.

- donations to fund magistracies διὰ βίου must have been entered in written form; usually every foundation and donation will have been accompanied by negotiations, vote of acceptance etc., all of which was recorded in writing; the same has to be true for promises of donation (κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κτλ.);
- the public texts mentioned above must have generated some kind of written record: we have only very short and summary honorary inscriptions, but all of them presuppose longer honorary decrees (and their drafts);
- honorary decrees were passed either by the community or by community councils; there must have been written protocols of their meetings;
- graves had to be bought, of course, with the usual contracts;
- testaments were deposited;
- the care of the graves was sometimes expected of the community (32f.), sometimes of associations or neighbourhoods (171; 196); in both cases there must have been written agreements between the owner of the grave and his partners; sometimes the care of the grave was undertaken as a provision in a testament.

To sum up: a lot of paperwork is lost; we know only the private and official inscriptions, originating from individuals or the group. The epitaphs testify to an almost complete adaptation of the local customs; while the 'public' inscriptions correspond to the honorary inscriptions of the imperial age, they were meant for a restricted public. The picture changes even more when we turn to the votive inscriptions, but the reason is quite clear:²⁰ communication about religious matters was meant only for an interested and limited public.

Most of our texts are epitaphs, often thought to be dull and uninteresting, but not if viewed correctly. The Jews had the same purpose in these texts as their pagan contemporaries: memory, honour, protection of the grave, and in adopting the use of these texts they also accepted the predominant purpose which the increasing number of grave inscriptions had in the pagan world: they helped to define the relationship of the dead and the living to the polis. Almost no Jewish text attests a different system of values, and whoever wanted 'the Jews' to take care of his grave put the Jewish community next to other respectable institutions of civic life as a trustworthy, reliable organisation. If this was the aim of members of communities in general, they had to use the same language and the

²⁰ Some of the contemporary cults developed their own language, too: the Jews are not unique in this regard.

same system of signs as everybody else to make themselves understood. Thus the humble epitaphs have implications for the place individual Jews wanted to reach in the society of Asia Minor, and therefore these texts have special importance.

LOCAL IDENTITIES

The wish to emphasise one's part in the polis and the acceptance of the local epigraphic code lead to our next point, norms and identity vis-à-vis the polis and one's own group.

We start with the reservation of seats in a theatre or *odeion*. Topos inscriptions for Jews are in no way different from the seating arrangements of other groups (15f.; 37–40). Once the Jews asked for and received permission to mark their places in the same way as *aurarii*, *linourgoi*, *naukleroi*, *phortegoi* and everybody else,²¹ they declared themselves to be part of the polis and they were accepted as such (the same goes for their possible allegiance to the Blues). The polis will have related to them as an association or club – and we shall have to see how far the analogy carries: are the Jewish communities comparable to the professional or religious associations of the East? Points to compare are quite obvious, starting with the title (πληθος, σύνοδος, and so on; even συναγωγή has its pagan counterparts), the magistrates, the organisation, the administrative relation to the polis, the mixture of cult and communal centre. By using this language even where they would have had another choice, the Jews subscribed to the world view behind it, presented themselves as loyal and dependable sections of the city and strengthened the city's idea that they belonged to the associations. But it is also worthwhile to explore the differences.

There are no honorary statues for Jews or pagans decreed by a Jewish community – perhaps partly in consequence of the second commandment.²² Honorary inscriptions for members of the synagogue are rare, perhaps because most of them were placed in the walls of the synagogue, and not many synagogues have been excavated in Asia Minor. In contrast to the pagan associations the Jews could not publish honours in an ἐπιφανέστατος τόπος: they had no access to such public space. The scarcity of honorary inscriptions for Jews is sometimes explained as an attempt to suppress social differences in the community: nobody was

²¹ For a list see van Nijf 1997: 257–9.

²² Cf. Chaniotis 2003: 12: the erection of a statue was usually accompanied by some kind of ritual.

allowed to rise above the others. I do not believe this explanation, because everybody was more than willing to list his own communal offices, the offices held by his father or by his forefathers. The agonistic spirit was perhaps mitigated, but certainly very much present.

Honorary inscriptions for pagan benefactors are rare, too. This is especially important because of the well-known theory that pagan god-fearers belonged to the upper echelons of their city's society, and therefore we expect them to act as benefactors of the synagogue in the way they acted for other associations or the city itself. Was it somehow a stigma to be honoured by the Jews, or was the number of interested pagan benefactors smaller than supposed?

Other associations honoured citizens for their goodwill towards the polis – nothing of the kind in the Jewish community. No Jew is honoured by the polis for his civic zeal, and there is not the slightest indication that the Jewish communities tried to act on behalf of their cities, whereas we know that other associations sometimes tried to benefit their cities (at least financially). Since euergetism is generally overrepresented in the epigraphic evidence, we can be quite sure about this discrepancy, and we are compelled to conclude that the Jewish communities did not participate in this kind of public communication, even if it acknowledged and created social bonds.

Since the *collegia* acted as focuses of social activity, membership of them had stabilising effects on the larger group of which the associations were part, not least because many people belonged to different associations: one or more religious clubs, a burial association, professional associations, neighbourhoods, the gymnasium. Those connections established a network of relations, created different but overlapping identities beneath the level of the polis and provided a source of civic identity to groups inferior to the elite. With the exception of the gymnasium there is no example of a Jew belonging to any of the associations, and we must therefore conclude that they had no part in the identities formed in this way – which is to say that they had no part in one of the most important ways of creating civic identity.

This is reinforced by another observation. Many religious associations were supported by the polis – but not the synagogue. We have no evidence that synagogues owned land apart from the synagogue buildings themselves; there is no evidence of any income that was not generated through members' fees or donations. The economic relations with the institutions or people surrounding the synagogue were not very strong.

The polis supported associations because it wanted to encourage their participation in civic life, and because they represented and enacted the social order – most clearly at the growing number of civic festivals and ceremonies, where social roles and collective identities were formed. This was a part of civic life almost unattainable by the Jews – if we do not accept some Christian sources, which describe the Jews as celebrating the great Sabbath and a festival of Dionysos together with the pagans.²³ Jews almost certainly had no part in the public banquets and distributions which constituted a major source of civic identity. There is no evidence connecting Jews with public processions, but on the other hand there is no reason why they should not have participated in the welcoming of a senator, governor or emperor.

I have stressed differences between the synagogue and other associations, but – as I said earlier – there were a lot of similarities, too. Isolation and integration are the two polar possibilities.²⁴ We have now arrived at one of the central questions: did the Jews identify themselves with the poleis they lived in, despite some of the structural differences noted above?

No Jew describes a polis as his *patris*; only the Jewish community is designated with this term, just once (169). Jews as councillors, and perhaps magistrates, furnish the most important argument for an identity within the polis. Jews were councillors from the times of Septimius Severus, but perhaps not quite voluntarily. These offices nevertheless opened a wide range of possibilities for interaction and co-operation and provided the possibility to learn the language of power, even if the legislator excused the Jews from certain symbolic and religious acts. And it may be possible to prove some active identification with the polis: the office of councillor was sometimes important enough to be mentioned on Jewish inscriptions, even on votive offerings, which were primarily designed to be read by fellow Jews. The donors expected to enjoy a reputation enhanced by public office, not only in the polis but also in their own community. Is it significant that we know of nobody who undertook an office both in the

²³ We do not know how far the knowledge of Jewish festivals spread: there is only one inscription implying that pagans knew of the Jewish festival calendar (196). Even more difficult is the question to what degree Jewish timescales (e.g. the observance of the Sabbath) influenced the division of time in a polis.

²⁴ Isolation was not compensated for through a connection with other Jewish communities in Asia Minor, Eretz Israel or some other part of the world – at least not before late antiquity. To put it more positively: Jewish communities had no connections transcending the boundaries of the polis, no connections that could have worked against integration into the polis (movement from city to city is attested very rarely, too).

synagogue and in the polis? Or were the magistracies rated higher, cancelling any mention of an office in the Jewish community?

In the second and third centuries people started to use their city-ethnicity even in their hometowns. This is generally supposed to be a new way of showing one's solidarity with the hometown. Jews describe themselves as *Ephesioi* in Ephesos, as *Sardianoι* in Sardis, a woman as *Hierapolitis* in Hierapolis, and so on. They participated in this new custom and stressed their polis-allegiance even after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. In the third century we know of at least one case of Jewish history (Noah) accepted as part of a city's history: Jews and Greeks participated in the same form of polis-building with the help of a common mythical past. Onomastics can be used to show the same phenomenon, for instance, in Hierapolis (209): ἡ σορὸς καὶ ὁ περὶ αὐτὴν τόπος Αὐρ. Ἀντιο[χί]δο[υ]ς Μακεδόνης Πολυδεύκουσ' Ἀντωνεινιανοῦ Ἰουδέου. The personal name Antiochos is well attested at Hierapolis, as can be expected in a Seleucid foundation with a *phyle* Antiochis. Macedon is another hint at the city's past, and Antoninianus refers to the Severan dynasty: Caracalla bestowed the title *νεωκόρος* on Hierapolis. Whoever chose the names of this man wanted to show his allegiance to the city's past – a past very much prominent in imperial times.

Let us explore onomastics a bit more. It would be worthwhile to compare the names used by the Jews of Asia Minor with other large groups of names in Palestine, Syria and Rome.²⁵ The diversity of names in Asia seems to be greater than in Rome; there are a certain number of typically Jewish names, about which later, but otherwise there is no unifying feature of Jewish onomastics in Asia Minor – nor is such a feature perhaps even to be expected. As we have seen in Hierapolis, we have to expect names typical for a certain city or region. Jews even bore indigenous names, if they had some similarity with Greek or Hebrew names (Artemeis, Matheis, 164; 216). Some popular names are missing: there is almost no one named Johanan, and the popularity of Hasmonean names in Eretz Israel has no counterpart in Asia Minor.

Choosing names typical for a city or a certain region seems to be another way of complying with local expectations. But even in such a seemingly clear-cut case, epigraphy may lead us astray. Names like Παῦλος ὁ καὶ Σαῦλος help us to understand the problem. Double-names are a frequent phenomenon with pagans, Christians – and Jews. Jews with double-names are known from literature and inscriptions.

²⁵ Ilan 2002 collected the material from Palestine.

Usually a Greek name comes first, and the second name is not a nickname but a Semitic one. We know for instance one Ἰκέσιος ὁ καὶ Ἰούδας (189) or one Σαμουήλ ὁ καὶ Ἰουλιανός (95). In Hellenistic and Roman Egypt one and the same person used a Greek and an Egyptian name, depending on the context in which he found himself. Perhaps the Jewish use of double-names is not too different from the Egyptian one: they may have used their Greek name in the context of Greco-Roman culture, their Semitic name within their own group. In this light, the use of chiefly Greek names on inscriptions can be easily explained: the epigraphic habit was taken over from the Greeks, and Greek names were used according to that habit.²⁶ It is therefore difficult to assess the extent to which Semitic names were used in purely Jewish circles. But I suspect that we would not be completely wrong in taking Greek names as proof of acculturation and Greek identity. In the Sardis synagogue and in some other synagogues, i.e. in contexts almost completely Jewish, Greco-Roman names were used.²⁷

To sum up: the Jews and the polis shared a common language to a certain degree, but there were differences, too. It was easier for individual Jews to identify themselves with the polis than it was for the Jewish community at large. Religion plays the most prominent part in accounting for the differences.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

Did Jews, pagans and Christians have different religious identities? Such a notion clashes with a prominent idea in the study of the religions in the Roman Empire: the 'market-place'.²⁸ This metaphor is used to describe the religious world of the Roman Empire as a system of competing religions enabling and forcing the individual to make his own choices. Creativity and adaptation follow, no religion seems to have been exclusive, society was pluralistic and did not discountenance contacts between different

²⁶ Only from the fourth century do Old Testament names become more frequent; and the rare Iakobos or Iosephos before that changed into an indeclinable Ioseph or Iakob. These changes are of some significance for our problem, as we shall see later.

²⁷ The publication of five Hebrew inscriptions from the Sardis synagogue actually strengthens this argument (105-9): if it was possible to put a Hebrew inscription in a synagogue, the simultaneous use of the Greek language and Greek formulas must have had some meaning: for instance observance of a local norm in the selection of language, forms and names – even in the synagogue setting (let me just add that I am not convinced by the dating of the synagogue proposed by Magness 2005, but any argument would be too long for the purposes of this paper).

²⁸ North 1992.

religious groups. Religions, rituals and cults co-existed, and confrontation seemed to be an exception to the rule. Is this model applicable to the Jewish diaspora of Asia Minor?

In our discussion of votive inscriptions above we reached the conclusion that interaction with outsiders did not matter, that the preservation of self-identity was paramount, and self-identity meant distinguishing oneself from the pagan surroundings. But this is only partially true, and at least the individual Jew had other choices which entailed integration into society as a Jew – as well as the choice to develop a form of Judaism that reacted against pagan attractions or attracted Christians and pagans.

Quite a few texts cannot be easily classified as Jewish, pagan or Christian, and those texts provide some basis for the idea of the marketplace. But we do not know how the beliefs expressed in these texts were formed, if a Jew's path led him nearer to the Christian or pagan gods, if the journey started from a traditional pagan position influenced by Jewish or Christian creeds. But we can be sure of one thing: the marketplace presupposes knowledge, even if it was not always exact, even if it sometimes belonged to the realm of superstition (most clearly seen in the use of Jewish magical formulas on amulets, magic stones and magic texts, or in the use of Jewish curses which were effective only if the curser expected to be understood and obeyed by the majority of the population). This kind of knowledge about Jews existed in most regions of Asia Minor.

When it comes to individual religious choices, it must be confessed that we have not the slightest idea of the importance which the individual members of the diaspora communities attached to religion in their daily life. Is the presumed celebration of the great Sabbath part of the marketplace, is it a proof of religious decadence (and change), can we use this single example to generalise about the whole of the diaspora? There are more questions than answers. Jews described themselves as *Ioudaioi* on their graves, but was this a declaration of faith or just a proclamation of membership in a certain group? We believe that the Roman definition of *Ioudaios* changed after 70 CE, but what about Jewish self-definition? Religious symbols on gravestones are not so common in the imperial age, more frequent in late antiquity.

Jewish and Christian parenetic texts, and the confessions set up by pagans in the local sanctuaries of indigenous gods, testify to common ethics, at least in regard to everyday life. This has implications for some reconstructions of Christian success, but here it is important to note that a common code of conduct must have enabled different groups to live together and cross boundaries.

The visitors to the marketplace had to accept the notion that the religions available were of equal value – otherwise the concept is meaningless.²⁹ Only if another religion provided viable solutions to your problems would you start to take over some of its beliefs. If this is true, we gain some idea of how the end of the marketplace came about: it ceased to exist in the fourth century because of the rise of Christianity. Christian interest in Judaism did not come to an end, nor perhaps did pagan interest in Judaism, but the now dominant expectation was that of difference – and the Jewish communities started to move in that direction.

THE END OF THE EPIGRAPHIC HABIT IN ASIA MINOR

The results of our survey point in different directions: integration and separation, religious affinities and barriers, acceptance of the norms of pagan society and at the same time reliance on the old traditions and customs that resulted in segregation from society. The smallest differences and problems are evident during periods of social and political stability, i.e. the first two or three centuries CE, the world of the Principate. The consensus of society began to crack in the later third century; and the rise of Christianity must have at least posed a problem for the other religious communities.

The changes in late antiquity widened the differences between the forms of Jewish life and those of the surroundings. We might begin with a small onomastic item. The use of indeclinable biblical names rose sharply in late antiquity. This change in onomastics meant that the Jews lost a part of their polis-identity – but at the same time Greek onomastics started to change into Christian onomastics. To the extent that they were involved in this change, the Jews did not want to surrender their onomasticon to the Christians; they wanted rather to stress their difference. The graveyards of Corycus show this phenomenon most clearly: the same names are used by Jews and Christians – but in undeclined and declined forms, respectively.

In late antiquity, the term *Ioudaios* remained in use, but the designation *Hebraios* became more frequent. Hebrew letters and formulas started appearing on the inscriptions, and Jewish symbols became more frequent, too (*menoroth*, *shofar*, *lulab* and so on). The separation from the pagan and Christian environment was perhaps initiated by the

²⁹ This seems to me an argument for polytheists as the main visitors of the marketplace.

Christians, but – as a reaction – emphasised by the Jews as well. One's particular identity is stressed, as well as the differences between Jews and others. Even if we do not know how many Jews could read the Hebrew letters on the gravestones, we can be certain that pagans and Christians recognised the different code. The area of common language diminished; the Jewish communities started increasingly to act self-referentially. There may be exceptions to this rule, mostly in places with strong pagan traditions.

The stress on a Hebrew identity had – even in Asia Minor – older roots, as a brief look at the Old Testament translations shows: the translators tried quite early to break from the traditions of a thoroughly Greek Old Testament, going back to the Septuagint. But it took a long time for these tendencies to reach the world of epigraphy. This is, in my opinion, proof of the high degree of interaction achieved during the Roman Empire. Christianity and the end of antiquity had to combine to change this. Around 600 CE inscriptions ceased, and when we encounter Jewish communities in the ninth and tenth centuries they are living solely according to Hebrew traditions, in an almost Greekless world. Late antiquity had resulted in a stronger emphasis on one's particular identity, and a stronger connection between the Jewish communities. Interaction was no longer a source of identity, shared knowledge was small, common symbols and communicative techniques were lost.

THE EPIGRAPHIC HABIT IN SYRIA

As we have just seen, there were tendencies in the life of the Jewish communities that found epigraphic expression quite late, or to put it another way: our exploration of the epigraphic habit may well provide us with only part of the truth about life in the diaspora. Therefore we shall try to compare these results with the situation in another part of the eastern Empire, namely Syria, and we might remember that Syrian influences can be seen in neighbouring regions of Asia Minor, for instance in Cilicia.³⁰ Syria is less of a political or linguistic unity than Asia Minor: Greek, Aramaic, Syriac in different dialects, Palmyrene and a plethora of other languages are found,³¹ and we do not even know if they were

³⁰ Some literary testimonies on the connection of the Cilician and Syrian diaspora are to be found *IJudOr* II: 492–6. The use of sarcophagi made of lead, 229 (Aigai), is certainly an imported custom; and many parallels cited to explain 248 (Tarsos) are from Syria or Palestine.

³¹ Taylor 2002: 298–331.

mutually intelligible or if they contributed in any way to the identities of their speakers.³² The diverse linguistic cultures of Syria can be taken as a first warning that circumstances will not be as uniform as in Asia Minor, that there will be no single epigraphic habit.

Jewish presence in Syria requires no special proof:³³ Syria was in constant contact with Judaea, as is only to be expected, and Syria was in constant contact with the Babylonian diaspora, too. Nowhere outside of Judaea were comparable numbers of Jews to be found;³⁴ there is even the famous story of King Izates of Adiabene, who converted to Judaism,³⁵ and it is estimated that 12 per cent of the population of Edessa was Jewish,³⁶ although this figure is surely much too high. Literary sources portray different aspects of the life and history of the Jews, in critique not only of the great revolt but also of the Jews' constant confrontation with Christianity³⁷ – thus reflecting a Christian bias (at least during the high Empire).

The distribution of the inscriptions set up by Syrian Jews in time and space corresponds *grosso modo* to the distribution of other texts:³⁸ only when (and where) there is a certain abundance of inscriptions, i.e. when they were used as a common means of communication, are Jewish inscriptions to be found too. To be more precise, there is in Syria no single Hellenistic Jewish text, and almost no inscription securely dated to the first

³² Millar *Roman Near East*: 494: 'To say that is of course to leave open the question of whether these related languages were in fact mutually intelligible, either when written... or when spoken; and, more important, whether, even if they were mutually intelligible, this fact had any significance for cultural exchanges, political attitudes or perceived identities.' This is said only about one part of the Roman Near East – but extends *mutatis mutandis* to all the other parts and their relations with each other.

³³ 'Syria' is used in a loose, geographical sense – the same way as in *IJudOr* III; the following observations are, therefore, based on Syr 1–130 and on an evidently incomplete selection of texts from other regions, but mostly from Judaea (cf. e.g. *IJudOr* III: App. 2: 'Jewish inscriptions in Palmyrene' from Beth She'arim and Jerusalem); I do not intend to discuss the ascriptions: the texts in *IJudOr* III are taken to be Jewish without further discussion. For a short assessment of the Jewish diaspora in Syria, cf. the overview in Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: III: 1, 13–15; Barclay 1996: 242–58; Levine 2000: 116–8.

³⁴ Jos. *BJ* 7.43: τὸ γὰρ Ἰουδαίων γένος πολὺ μὲν κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην παρέσπαρται τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις, πλείστον δὲ τῇ Συρίᾳ κατὰ τὴν γειτνίασιν ἀναμειγμένον, ἑξαίρετως δ' ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας ἦν πολὺ διὰ τὸ τῆς πόλεως μέγεθος. Cf. *BJ* 2.561; 7.368 on the number of Jewish dead in Damascus; *AJ* 11.133 on the number of Jews πέραν... Εὐφράτου and the further references provided by Schürer, Vermes and Millar *History*: III 1, 7 n. 13.

³⁵ On the literary aspect of the conversion story in Jos. *AJ* 20.17–53, esp. 44–8 see Ameling 1993: 505–8.

³⁶ Drijvers 1992: 138.

³⁷ E.g. Ambros. *Ep.* 40.15; Eutychius of Alexandria (tenth century), *CSCO* 472, at 101–2.

³⁸ Cf. for inscriptions as sources for the history of Syria Sartre *Alexandre*: 24–8. Only the ossuaries from Jerusalem are securely dated to the first century, thereby providing proof that the use of inscriptions depended completely on the habit of the surroundings.

century CE, but a large number belonging to the third and fourth centuries, with an interesting decline afterwards.³⁹ This consequently reduces our ability to form a picture of the ways of life of the Jewish communities under the strengthening Christian rule.

Epigraphy is usually an urban phenomenon – and if we count places like Dura-Europos among the cities, this holds true for the Syrian diaspora, too.⁴⁰ Only very few texts seem to come from the *chora* of a polis (or city), but there is always the possibility that the find spots of inscriptions were not accurately recorded (if at all), and some stones may have drifted not to, but from a city. Interestingly, most texts from the *chora* or from villages attest to the existence of synagogues,⁴¹ as for instance the plaque Syr 12 (bought in Sidon): συναγωγῆς Ὁρνιθοκόμης, or the inscribed mosaic from Han Halde (*mutatio* Heldua, about 20 km south of Berytos), reporting the building of an apse and its ψήφωσις, evidently part of a synagogue and perhaps the place of its Torah shrine.⁴² The roughly datable inscriptions of this type are quite late, and they bear witness to the use of the Greek language in certain circumstances: Greek was the language adopted for the expression of euergetism, even if most of the inhabitants of the *chora* will have used another language in their daily life. The extraordinary importance of these Greek inscriptions is further accentuated by the fact that the Jews of the *chora* did not use any other types of inscriptions – not even in Aramaic, not even to mark their own graves. Of course, the world of the polis was not as prevalent in Syria as in Asia Minor: a civic life in the traditional sense is found above all in the former Seleucid cities; the difference between city and country

³⁹ There are some texts dated to the fourth/sixth century (e.g. Syr 10f.), or to the second/seventh century (e.g. Syr 3), but only Syr 23f. (Berytos and vicinity), Syr 41 (Admedera) belong – according to the editors' opinion – to the fifth/sixth century, and Syr 48 (Palmyra) to the seventh century. This decline may be pure chance, but we might remember the rapid decline of identifiable pagan inscriptions in Syria after the time of Julian the Apostate, Trombley 1995: 135. At least in northern Syria, the late fourth and early fifth century brought a lot of misery to the Jewish communities, as will be noted later, which might well have put an end to public display.

⁴⁰ People from Syria are buried in Jerusalem and Beth She'arim, and these places should be added to the urban find-spots of the diaspora; but it should be noted that all of these dead come from one city or another (Syr 6–8 (Beth She'arim); 9 (Jerusalem) from Tyrus; Syr 17–19 (Beth She'arim) from Sidon; Syr 22 (Jerusalem) from one of the cities called Chalcis; Syr 25f. (Beth She'arim) from Berytos; Syr 32 (Beth She'arim) from Byblos; Syr 51f. (Beth She'arim) from Palmyra; Syr 72 (Jerusalem) and Syr 74 (Beth She'arim) from Antiocheia).

⁴¹ For a Jewish community in a large and prosperous village with its own synagogue, see also John of Ephesus, *PO* 17.90ff. (quoted n. 94).

⁴² Syr 38 (Damatha) belongs rather to a synagogue than to a private building; Syr 41 (Admedera): καλῶς ἐτίμησεν ἀνήλωμα. ἡκοδομή τοῦ νομίγματα ψ' – certainly a very high sum.

is more marked than elsewhere,⁴³ and this difference is also a linguistic difference between Greek and Aramaic.⁴⁴ We know of Jews living in the country, for instance as *coloni* on the territory of Antiocheia (Libanius, *Or.* 47.13ff.), and there will have been many more.⁴⁵ They are not present in our record, because we depend very much 'on the accidents of the "epigraphic habit"'.⁴⁶ The erection of inscribed monuments will have been perceived as a mark of the upper classes, and therefore these Jews did not erect any inscriptions, even if they were quite prosperous. Beside this difference in status it may have been the difference between town and country which caused a different epigraphic behaviour. The only inscriptions set up emphasise this again: they are in Greek, not Aramaic, they concern buildings, not the private affairs of *coloni* or peasants, and are thus marked quite clearly as imitations of upper-class behaviour: such behaviour had a certain place in the public affairs of the community, but not in the private habits of its members.

There is ample literary evidence that the Jews in the cities used the local dialect; Jews in Babylonia evidently spoke or wrote mostly in Aramaic, even if they still used the Hebrew Bible and based their exegetical work on the Hebrew Mishnah.⁴⁷ Some time before 300 CE the Peshitta was translated from Hebrew into Syriac, which brings to mind the emergence of Syriac as a language used by Christian literature – but it is still not clear whether the translation originated in Jewish or Judaeo-Christian circles. Language always has social aspects, and herein is perhaps the greatest difference between Syria and Asia Minor: the knowledge of Greek was not a necessary qualification of a man of substance in the society of Syria.⁴⁸

⁴³ Cf. generally Brown 1982: 155: 'To Libanius of Antioch, for instance, interest in the villagers meant interest in a world unimaginably alien to his own.'

⁴⁴ Brock 1994: 150: 'A number of references in John Chrysostom's writings indicate that the demarcation between spoken Greek and spoken Aramaic is essentially provided by the distinction between polis and *chora*. Even in the polis, however, Aramaic was clearly the normal language of the lower classes. It is in fact likely that large numbers of people, especially in the towns, will have been bilingual, with in most cases Aramaic as the mother tongue.' In support of this statement Brock cites Bardy 1948; Poggi 1990; Bowersock *Hellenism*: 29–40.

⁴⁵ Sartre *Alexandre*: 934 is of a different opinion: 'les Juifs de Syrie sont plutôt des citadins', but see again, e.g., John of Ephesus, *PO* 17. 90ff. (quoted n. 94).

⁴⁶ Millar *Roman Near East*: 230 (on Syria). The record in Palestine is quite clear in this regard, Baumann 1999: 324: 'Das Griechische wurde vor allem in den Städten... und allen samaritanischen Synagogen verwendet, während in den eher ländlichen Gebieten das Aramäische oder Hebräische vorherrscht. Eine Ausnahme bilden Synagogen in den Orten der Dekapolis... sowie *saffuriyye*/Sepphoris, in denen Inschriften zweisprachig sind. Offenbar beharrten dort bestimmte Kreise bewußt auf der tradierten Sprache. Auf dem flachen Land sprach dagegen die Bevölkerung weiterhin Aramäisch.'

⁴⁷ Millar *Roman Near East*: 499–501.

⁴⁸ Brown 1982: 160.

Jewish inscriptions were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Palmyrene, perhaps also in Iranian dialects, even if the majority were in Greek.⁴⁹ Latin, the language of power, is completely absent.⁵⁰ Some texts are bilingual: epitaphs can end with a 'shalom' (*IJudOr* III Syr 7; Syr 39; possibly Syr 15), as in other parts of the diaspora: this is no real proof of bilingualism. But in some cases the same text has been written in two languages: we can take note of two ossuaries in Jerusalem (Syr 9; Syr 72),⁵¹ one Greco-Palmyrene text from Palmyra (Syr 49), one Greco-Aramaic from Edessa (Syr 80) and two quite unimportant texts from Dura-Europos (Syr 92; 131).⁵² Byblos yields an epitaph in Hebrew/Aramaic, dated by the editors to 385/6 (Syr 30).

Bilingual texts are not very common in Asia Minor or the more western parts of the diaspora, but quite common in the Roman Near East: the Jews adapted themselves to this habit, and the places where these texts were found are a further proof of this, especially Jerusalem with its tradition of numerous Hebrew ossuaries.⁵³ The bilingual inscriptions are from places where the non-Greek language was dominant, and where inscriptional bilingualism was systematically practised, as in Palmyra.⁵⁴ The only exception is provided by the text from Byblos: its date strengthens the conclusion that the adoption of Hebrew or Aramaic is a late phenomenon in the diaspora, at least in the Greek-speaking diaspora of the cities. And there is another conclusion to be drawn: there were different epigraphic cultures in different parts of Syria, dependent on the languages spoken, dependent on the gods venerated and dependent on the different ways of life which are to be divided not just into urban and country life.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Brock in this volume, p. 290, remarks that there are no Jewish or Christian inscriptions in Old Syriac.

⁵⁰ *IJudOr* III Syr 43 (fourth/fifth century) is the only exception, but this inscription was found in Concordia, Italy; the sarcophagus belongs to *Flavia Optata mili(tis) de num regi. Emes. Iude(o)ru*, possibly the wife of a veteran, who had belonged to a troop *regiorum Emesenorum Iudeorum*. It is neither proved nor even probable that Flavia Optata and her husband were Jews, and the find spot as well as the military context explain the use of Latin: there is no connection with any kind of epigraphic habit in Syria.

⁵¹ Only in the case of Syr 72 does the Aramaic text record an additional person, not present in the Greek version. Millar *Roman Near East*: 234: 'Such a pattern is perfectly exemplified in Acts, when Paul, after speaking to the Roman tribune in Greek, is represented as turning to address the crowd "in the *Hebrais dialektos*". It is only unfortunate that we cannot be certain whether Luke means to represent him as speaking in Hebrew or in Aramaic (or even whether he was fully aware of the difference); cf., also, Millar 2006: 225 – Syr 22 is an ossuary with Greek text, only.

⁵² One could argue that Syr 131, a bilingual jar inscription, was occasioned by the use of the vessel.

⁵³ On this genre and its implications, see especially Deines and Fritz 1999: 222–3 with further references.

⁵⁴ Millar *Roman Near East*: 233 on bilingualism in Palmyra.

⁵⁵ Millar *Roman Near East*: 493: 'Above all, the notion that there was a "Syrian" culture, embracing equally the zone of Syriac literature and Roman Syria, goes beyond our evidence.' Cf. Millar *Roman Near East*: 233 on different epigraphic habits in different regions.

A great part of Syria belonged still to the Greek world, especially the coastal cities and the places founded by the Seleucids. The Jewish inscriptions from these cities are Greek – from Tyros (Syr 1–3; 5f.; 8–10)⁵⁶ and from the other cities of the Phoenician coast.⁵⁷ The same holds true for the cities of the Syrian tetrapolis: only Greek texts are to be found in Apamea (with the exception of the ossuary in Jerusalem, Syr 72) and Antiocheia (Syr 73f.). Completely different is the situation in other places: Palmyra produced Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek inscriptions,⁵⁸ as did Dura-Europos. We shall try to give a short overview of the linguistic situation of the Dura-Europos community, since we know so many texts from the synagogue: it is, in terms of sheer numbers, the most richly documented place of Jewish life in Syria.⁵⁹

The number of inscriptions from the Dura synagogue should not obscure the simple fact that the community was not very large, at least not in its early stages, i.e. before it started to enlarge the synagogue in 244. We know almost nothing about the community before this time; the few surviving texts are in Aramaic (Syr 81–3); this would not be terribly significant, since they are graffiti in plaster, if it were not certain that the daily language for most people – under Parthian as well as under Roman rule – was Greek.⁶⁰ This preference for Aramaic has been attributed to the proximity of the great Babylonian diaspora,⁶¹ but it might have a simpler explanation: the Greek language in the Syrian diaspora (outside the *poleis*) was not as strongly preferred as in Asia Minor; thus we witness a general trend of the Jewish communities, even ones which placed a certain small distance between themselves and the other parts of the population. The poor quality of the execution of these graffiti led Noy and Bloedhorn (commentary to Syr 83) to conclude that the Jews of Dura embraced the epigraphic habit rather late, and if Syr 83 really marks a donation, even this is clumsily done. Not too much weight should be

⁵⁶ The exceptions of Syr 7; Syr 9 are explained above; Syr 4 is an amulet in Hebrew, written in a Samaritan script; it belongs to the world of magic, which used Hebrew or Aramaic letters, words, sentences often and everywhere. I note in passing the other amulets, texts that might have been used by Jews, but might have been used by anyone else too. In no case are they indicators of the use of language: Syr 20 (Byblos; prayer on gem, Greek and Aramaic); Syr 27 (recorded at Beirut; Greek with a final 'shalom'); Syr 42 (Damascus; Hebrew in Samaritan script); Syr 76 (Aleppo; Hebrew/Aramaic).

⁵⁷ Again, there are some easily explained exceptions: on Syr 15; Syr 20; Syr 30, see above.

⁵⁸ Since the territory of Palmyra bordered on the territory of Apamea, this difference is very marked and could repay further thought.

⁵⁹ The Sardis synagogue offers the obvious parallel: Sardis and Dura are communities which would be quite unknown without the excavation of the synagogue – and in both cases the excavations have produced so many inscriptions as to dwarf the epigraphic remains of all other communities and render every statistic meaningless.

⁶⁰ Millar *Roman Near East*: 448, citing the graffiti. ⁶¹ Roth-Gerson 2001: 100.

put on the interpretation of these few texts, but even with the completion of the enlarged synagogue, the epigraphic habit did not really adapt itself to the habit of the town.

Greek was the language of self-representation used in the official or honorary inscriptions set up in Dura (as it was in the other parts of the Near East), since the Greek upper class still dominated this Seleucid foundation in Parthian and Roman times.⁶² Neither the second and third centuries nor the fourth and fifth centuries produced pagan public inscriptions in Semitic languages.⁶³ In view of this, it is quite significant that the official dedication of the new synagogue was written in Aramaic (Syr 84f., date: 244/5). There is no comparable Greek text, even though donor inscriptions were written not only in Aramaic but in Greek too (Greek: Syr 86–8; Syr 90; Aramaic: Syr 89; Syr 91; Syr 93–5).⁶⁴ As Millar has pointed out,⁶⁵ the dedication was in the synagogue, to be seen only by the members of the community. The community may, therefore, be called bilingual,⁶⁶ but clearly preferred the use of Aramaic for important messages. The Jews from Dura were not very prominent in the surrounding society, did not seek to make a good impression or gain status within it; nobody is mentioned in the Dura synagogue who could (or cared to) give a title or an

⁶² Welles 1951. ⁶³ Millar 2006: 395.

⁶⁴ Syr 86–8 are sometimes treated as Greek versions of Syr 84f. (cf. *IJudOr* III: 149: 'The Greek inscriptions on ceiling tiles... carry, between them, some of the information given in Aramaic in #Syr 84. The texts are all written inside wreaths, and similar wreaths were painted on some of the other tiles... The Greek inscriptions are all in the same hand according to Crosby. The letters are much larger than the Aramaic of #Syr 84, and would be considerably easier to read from ground level. The tradition of Greek official inscriptions at Dura would have meant that scribes had much more practice at creating documents of a public nature in Greek than in Aramaic, and the Greek would have had much more of a visual impact in the synagogue. Roth-Gerson suggests that the use of parallel inscriptions in two languages at Dura, a common practice in Palestine but not normal in the Diaspora, can be attributed to Dura's proximity to Babylonia'). Actually, the officials from Syr 84f. are remembered as donors in Syr 86–8, while Syr 84f. are formal texts, which is the first and most important difference; moreover, the officials are identified as being in charge of the building, not as contributing to it, and the Greek versions lack every aspect of communal enterprise and also lack the last part, for which there is no parallel in Greek epigraphy (I quote the translation by Noy and Bloedhorn in *IJudOr* III: 142): 'With a willing spirit they began to build in the 56th year, and they sent to... and they made haste... and they worked in... Blessing from the elders and from all the children of... they worked and toiled... Peace to them and their wives and all their children'; part B is in the same vein.

⁶⁵ Millar *Roman Near East*: 470.

⁶⁶ See below on the Persian texts. I do not believe that *P.Dura* 10, a piece of parchment with a fragmentary benediction after the meal in Hebrew, is enough to call the community trilingual: Hebrew may have been used for purely liturgical purposes (but even this is more than we can say about religious life in Asia Minor). The absence of the use of Palmyrene seems interesting, too, since there was quite a large group of Palmyrene speakers and writers in Dura (*CIJ* II 825 = *IJudOr* III: App. 22 is not considered Jewish by the editors); but cf. *IJudOr* III: 160 on Syr. 95: 'The recording of numerous generations of ancestors is also a Palmyrene habit.'

indication of his standing in the civic or even Roman world – in striking contrast to the status-consciousness and self-representation in the Sardis synagogue. But before concluding that the Dura community was not as integrated into society as the Sardis community, we should remember that Dura was a much more mixed society, where the epigraphic habit possibly had not reached every sector in the same way and had possibly worked differently with the different groups.⁶⁷

The wall paintings had their own inscriptions, describing the characters in the paintings. This was neither unique nor even unusual: such descriptions have been found on the walls of pagan temples, too. Most of the inscriptions on the synagogue's walls were in Aramaic (Syr 96–9; 101; 103–6), only two were in Greek (Syr 100; 102), written by the painter himself, but obviously without too much experience in the Greek language.⁶⁸ The same paintings have Iranian inscriptions too, whose *raison d'être* is still under discussion (Syr 111–26). Since the other Dura texts mention no members of the Jewish community with Iranian names,⁶⁹ I do not believe that they were written for the benefit of Iranian-speaking Jews as members of the community.⁷⁰ These texts, therefore, form no part of the epigraphic habit of the Dura community.

To sum up: bilingualism is a fact of life in Syria, sometimes even trilingualism. Some of the languages attested are used on inscriptions set up by the Jews there – but not all of them, it seems.⁷¹ In Palmyra, where epigraphic bilingualism is especially prominent, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek are used in monolingual inscriptions, and only one sepulchral inscription presents a Greek and Palmyrene text.⁷² On the other hand,

⁶⁷ Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 190–5 shows that only people from Palmyra worshipped the Palmyrene gods in Dura: there was no crossing of the religious boundaries there, and the worship was a way to enhance the community's self-respect and self-identification.

⁶⁸ Cf. the comment of *IJudOr* III: 167: 'The spelling (scil. Σλήμων instead of Solomon) would be natural for someone more familiar with Aramaic than Greek, suggesting that the decision which language to use was not the painter's.'

⁶⁹ Syr 127, Orbaz, might be Iranian; but even if it is, it is still only a graffito on a tile and might indicate the manufacturer or the place of manufacture.

⁷⁰ Syr 118 and Syr 123 are in Parthian, and *IJudOr* III: 200 emphasises the use of more than one Iranian language as being especially consistent with the idea of visitors (Syr 119 is described as Middle Persian, but on p. 203 it is labelled Parthian).

⁷¹ There are no Syriac texts in *IJudOr* III, perhaps *inter alia* because Syriac was used in inscriptions only from the fifth century on (a valuable introduction is provided by Briquel Chatonnet, Debié and Desreumaux 2004); another reason might be that Syriac may have been seen as the language of the Aramaic-speaking Christians.

⁷² Even this is not without interest: while the Hebrew texts are quotations from Deuteronomy on doorjambs (Syr 44–7), the Aramaic Syr 48 is a graffito; the sepulchral inscription Syr 49 is the only text addressed to the public of Palmyra at large – and here the two most important languages of daily life are used.

the use of a language indicates self-identification: Jews used Palmyrene in Jerusalem and Beth She'arim, where it supposedly was a sufficient indicator of origin (*IJudOr* III: App. 1–11). Since 'no other fully bilingual Jewish community is known from anywhere else, outside Palestine, within the Roman Empire',⁷³ we have taken a closer look at Dura-Europos. The Jews there had only partially adopted the epigraphic habits of the local ruling class; they had stayed – even epigraphically – with their own habits, as onomastics show quite clearly too.⁷⁴ This is surely one of the consequences of bilingualism.

We have seen that Jews used and spoke many of the languages of Syria, and the distribution of the different linguistic habits seems to reflect more than just compliance with the epigraphic habit of the surroundings – indeed, the case of Dura has shown how much a Jewish community could deviate from these habits, epigraphically and linguistically.

Completely different is the case of Apameia (Syr 53–71). The mosaic donor inscriptions of the synagogue point to the epigraphic riches which were once there. More important, they can be placed in context: since the publication of *IGLS* IV many mosaics from churches have been found in the territory of Apameia,⁷⁵ and – as expected – their texts are composed in the same way as the texts from the synagogue, saying the same things and emphasising the beneficent ways of the donors and their standing in the community.⁷⁶ The large synagogue, situated on one of the major streets of the city, is often seen as a parallel to the Sardis synagogue, as a proof that the Jewish community was accepted by the surrounding society. But this splendour did not last very long: it is all too easily forgotten that some time in the early fifth century a church was erected on the walls of the synagogue, whose mosaic floors are dated only to 392.

⁷³ Millar *Roman Near East*: 472 – speaking, of course, of Greco-Aramaic bilingualism; Greco-Latin bilingualism is more frequent.

⁷⁴ With one exception, Syr 107, there is no Greek name (the stamped jar fragments, Syr 129f., may or may not have a connection with the Jewish community, even if they were found in the synagogue (uncertain for Syr 130)).

⁷⁵ Feissel 1994: 287–94. To prove this custom in the vicinity of the synagogue seems to me more important than the question of stylistic influences; Brenk 1991 suggests the synagogue of El Hammam, possibly early fourth century, as the nearest parallel, and therefore the use of 'Musterbücher'. In some places, only the formula used indicates the donation; Noy and Bloedhorn *IJudOr* III: 154–5 point out that the $\mu\eta\theta\sigma\eta$ -formula is prominent in Syria and especially prominent in Dura – and it is used to indicate Jewish as well as Christian and pagan donations: Syr 23 etc.

⁷⁶ Cf. Donceel-Voûte *Pavements*: 465–75 for an analysis of these texts, remarking on p. 472: 'L'occasion s'est déjà présentée de faire remarquer le rôle secondaire que les inscriptions en syriaque tiennent par rapport à celles en grec. Elles servent pour des signatures... d'artistes, dans le champ de la composition... et non dans le texte principal, qui est en grec.' Cf., too, for similar considerations Baumann 1999: 313–37.

Did the Jews of the Syrian diaspora identify with their cities? We found some reason for doubt, for instance in Dura-Europos,⁷⁷ and we could find further reasons for doubt in the personal names used in the Syrian diaspora: even if the cities where most of the inscriptions originated were places of mostly Greek culture, the Jewish names do not reveal the same level of Greekness or adaptation to the Greek way of life as in Asia Minor.⁷⁸ On the other hand, we have also found some reason to believe that there was a different kind of identification: the different language used, and the parallel use of mosaic inscriptions in Apameia. Palmyra, for instance, seems to be a typical case of acculturation: Palmyrene Jews in Jerusalem used the Palmyrene language on their ossuaries (*IJudOr* III: App. I–II), and some of these short inscriptions are accompanied by Greek versions: bilinguality was typical for Palmyra. The wording (and format) of sepulchral inscriptions in Palmyra itself corresponds perfectly to the monuments set up by the pagans there (Syr 49), and a Jew might give away spaces within a tomb, where there were no strictly separate burial areas,⁷⁹ to a pagan – obviously without any qualms.⁸⁰ In many

⁷⁷ In this context, we should remember the very different interpretations put forth for the painting showing Mordechai, Ahasverus and Esther in the Dura synagogue. Noy and Bloedhorn *IJudOr* III: 172 give a summary (and all the essential references): 'A myth about the treatment of the Jews in Babylonia must have had particular resonance for the Dura community, although there are widely differing opinions about the nature of that resonance: Levit-Tawil thinks the enthroned Ahasverus symbolizes Iranian kingship and Shapur as the Jews' protector against Rome, while others see the story as being used to illustrate the Jews' loyalty to Rome against Persia.'

⁷⁸ Some remarks in passing: Greek names typically Jewish are quite frequent (Theodoros: Syr 1, Syr 53, Syr 57; Simon, Syr 2; Asther, Syr 6, Syr 27; Theodosia: Syr 8; Aristes: Syr 17; Eusebis: Syr 26, Syr 53; Asterios: Syr 28; Leontios: Syr 51; Eusebios and Ilasios: Syr 53; Photion: Syr 54; to the same category belongs Iustus: Syr 22); Old Testament names are very frequent, most of them in an inflected form, but some without any declination (Iakobos: Syr 1, Syr 34, Syr 92; Iosepos: Syr 2; Ioseph, Syr 14, Syr 39, Syr 79, Syr 89; Ioses: Syr 18, Syr 23, Syr 28; Daniel: Syr 7; Sara, Syr 8; Ioudas: Syr 9, Syr 31, Syr 35; Syr 72; Sosanne: Syr 16; Iesus: Syr 21; Benjamin: Syr 23; Samuel: Syr 24, Syr 34, Syr 41, Syr 49, Syr 50, Syr 80, Syr 84, Syr 85, Syr 86, Syr 131; Debora: Syr 24; Salome: Syr 27; Tobiah: Syr 38; Sadiq: Syr 48; Eleazar: Syr 48; Isakios: Syr 52, Syr 53f., Syr 92; Saul: Syr 53; Abraham: Syr 84f., Syr 88; Levi: Syr 91; Solomon: Syr 92; Job: Syr 93; Jeremiah: Syr 95); Semitic names with no spontaneous Old Testament association are prominent, too, whereas Latin names are rare – as expected (Matrona: Syr 10, Syr 77; Iustus: Syr 22; Clematius: Syr 34; Optata: Syr 43; Germanos: Syr 52).

⁷⁹ Syr 78–80 (Edessa) were once thought to belong to a separate Jewish cemetery.

⁸⁰ Syr 50, with Sartre *Alexandre*: 935, who cites for the text Gawlikowski and As'ad 1997: 33–4 no. 20. Perhaps a short remark on Syr 48, a graffito written on a column of the temple of Bel by 'Sadiq, priest, son of Eleazar' is in order; Noy and Bloedhorn *IJudOr* III believe that it was written after the Christian church – into which the temple had been converted – was abandoned in the seventh century and before the building was converted into a mosque in the twelfth century; Sadiq might have believed that the ruins were connected with King Solomon's foundation. While accepting the dating, I would like to mention the possibility that this graffito was used in the same way as Christians used graffiti in a temple – as a means of desecration.

places Jews identify themselves using the ethnics of their home towns⁸¹ (whereas an indication like Ἰουδαῖος, so common in Asia Minor, is only rarely found),⁸² and at least in Tyros, topos inscriptions in the circus attest to some kind of integration into the civic life.⁸³

In comparison with Asia Minor, professions are less frequently mentioned in sepulchral or donor inscriptions.⁸⁴ With the possible exception of a soldier (Syr 43) and a *scholasticus*⁸⁵ none of them can boast any connection with the Roman or local government,⁸⁶ or – again with the exception of the *scholasticus* – higher education.⁸⁷ Roman citizenship is only twice recorded (but most of our texts are later than 212). On the other hand, communal offices are mentioned quite often, almost always on building or donor inscriptions and (if applicable) on epitaphs.⁸⁸ This shows at least that more emphasis was placed on communal honours and posts than on civic ones – if there were civic ones (which may be doubted). A lack of civic connections can be deduced from the lack of honorary inscriptions too: not a single one has been found, and this is not only due to the fact that many of our inscriptions are from late antiquity, since enough third-century texts have been discovered. Most of the communal offices are mentioned in places accessible only to Jews, as in Beth She’arim or in synagogues.⁸⁹ Lacking, too, are theological statements, which are quite usual for donations and sepulchral inscriptions in other regions of the

⁸¹ Syr 5–9 (Tyros); Syr 17–19 (Sidon); Syr 22 (Chalkis); Syr 26 (Berytos); Syr 32 (Byblos); Syr 33 (ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως Ἀρκίης Λιβ[ά]νου); Syr 51f. (Palmyra); Syr 53f.; 74 (Antiocheia); Syr 72 (Apameia).

⁸² Syr 37, Ἰουδέων μνημα, where it is used to designate a communal burial building; Syr 40 is, I suspect, a patronymic (I print the text of *IJudOr* III): ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς Ν[εικο]λάου Μάγαντο[ς καὶ] Ἀβάβου Ἑβραίου καὶ Ζακ[χ]αίου Μαρ[ί]νου; Syr 86, πρεσβύτερος τῶν Ἰουδέων, marks the communal office, not the person.

⁸³ To be sure, the one belongs to a group of Samaritans, Syr 11, the other to a woman, perhaps a purple-fisher, Syr 10.

⁸⁴ Syr 10, a purple-fisher; Syr 14, a tailor; Syr 24, a σιρικάρτος; Syr 51, a banker.

⁸⁵ Syr 60 with the comment of Williams 1998: no. 1.87: ‘a man qualified to work as an advocate by virtue of having passed through all the normal stages of higher education’; cf. Lampe *s.v.* § 1: ‘one who has passed through the σχολὴ τῶν γραμμάτων, one with a general education’; *s.v.* § 2: ‘advocate, lawyer’.

⁸⁶ I do not believe that Syr 40 (quoted n. 82) is characterised adequately (‘A Jew in a list of magistrates/officers’).

⁸⁷ This is especially surprising, since we know from Libanius that (Greek) education was regarded very highly in the upper reaches of Jewish society. But there are no verse inscriptions nor any allusions to classical education – not even in naming practices.

⁸⁸ There are no special offices otherwise unknown from other places of the diaspora, but we may note a certain tendency to use Semitic titles: χωῖν Βυρίτιος, Syr 25; Ἀρβιάδης ὁ ῥαββί, Syr 36; ἐπὶ Νεμία ἀζζάνα καὶ τοῦ διάκονος, Syr 58. There is not a single indication of how the communities worked – no mention of an archive, for instance.

⁸⁹ Syr 30 (Byblos), written in Hebrew/Aramaic, is a sepulchral inscription; Syr 36 (Naveh) is found on a sarcophagus, but these are the only exceptions.

diaspora.⁹⁰ Evidence of interaction can be seen, but again we lack evidence of religious interaction.⁹¹ And we have to remember that the late fourth and early fifth centuries saw a sharp decline in Jewish relations with the Christians, not necessarily reflected in the epigraphic record:⁹² many synagogues in northern Syria were burnt down or converted into churches. Callinicum and Apameia are only the tip of the iceberg;⁹³ in Edessa the synagogue built above the grave of the Maccabean brothers was converted to a church, between 415 and 419 the synagogue in Imma suffered and in Rabbat Moab and its vicinity the synagogues were burnt down.⁹⁴ It is perhaps not surprising that the Jews in Gerasa turned to the

⁹⁰ *εὐλογίαί* (*vel sim.*) are sometimes mentioned (Syr 13; Syr 23; Syr 28); Syr 77 attests belief in the power of God to save a donor (Ἰὺπῆρ σωτηρίας κυρᾶς Ματρῶνας) and Syr 75 b/c attest to the belief in one god: εἰς θεὸς ὁ βοηθῶν ἡμᾶς (but the reasons for counting these texts as Jewish are flimsy at best: the strongest argument is the assumption that a text dated to 272/3 or 262/3 and confessing to believe in one God is better explained as Jewish than as Christian); Trombley 1995: II 280 argues that *IGLS* II 668 (Antiochene; [εἰ]ς θεὸς [μόνο]ς) 'is not incontestably Christian. It belongs to 376/7 AD, but has a six-pointed cross or star on it, suggesting Jewish authorship. Nor are the names of its authors distinctively Christian' – but one has to add: nor are they distinctively Jewish, and the reading is far from certain.

⁹¹ The literary sources supply such evidence, of course – note the Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum* and the complaints of John Chrysostom, in whose opinion the Christians of Antioch were much too interested in Judaism, and there were many Judaeo-Christian groups in Syria. A midrash originating in the fourth century attests a pagan priest converting to Judaism, Urbach 1975: 105–6, quoted and analysed at length by Trombley 1995: I, 163–4. At least one of the common Jewish-Christian 'dialogues' is set in Damascus, Bardy 1927 (*PO* 15). It would be easy to find more instances.

⁹² But see n. 39.

⁹³ The material has been gathered by Brenk 1991; on Edessa see Segal 1970: 182; on Imma: Sokrates, *HE* 7, 16; on Rabbat Moab and its vicinity see Nau 1927.

⁹⁴ Brenk cites the gruesome story reported by John of Ephesus, *Lives of Simeon and Sergius*, *PO* 17, 90ff.; I quote the complete text, because it gives a very good picture of Jewish life (and its enormous troubles in Christian times), the Jews' social conditions and dependence on the Christian owners of the land – even if they themselves are not without material resources: 'But, before doing this, because there were many Jews in that village, and they went about with great freedom, he carried on a continuous contest against them, and every day he used to contend against them as with slayers of God, being fervent in the love of his Lord, and gnashing his teeth, and saying... and he used to upbraid Christians who had dealings with them in the way of taking and giving. And one day he led about twenty of their disciples by night, and took fire, and went and burnt their great synagogue-house, with their books and their trumpets and all their furniture, saying... But these men, when they saw that all their hope had been cut off through the burning of their books and of all their furniture, lamented bitterly; and, because they were settled in the territory of Amida, and used to pay many contributions to the members of the church, out of desire for the abundance of their gold all the members of the church became their supporters, threatening the blessed Sergius and saying: "This man wishes to destroy the property of the church." But the zealous man, when these men had gone into the church of the city to prefer an accusation, while the fire was still in their synagogue, collected all his master's disciples with him and all the others from the village, and they took water, and went and put out that fire; and they cleared all the soil; and they collected stones, and within three days built a small martyr's chapel in that place, in the name of the blessed God-Bearer; and, at the end of one week the whole of the martyr's chapel was completed, while the Jews assembled and looked on and lamented, not knowing what to do; and that synagogue remained a martyr's

use of Aramaic in their synagogue (*CIJ* II 866f.)⁹⁵ – but this might be taken as an indication of a more general trend, too: Christian inscriptions (and writings) in the Syrian language had started to appear too, albeit slowly, and Palestinian synagogue inscriptions were multilingual in late antiquity.

As is to be expected, Syria offers a somewhat different picture from that of Asia Minor, and it would be interesting to compare our Syrian evidence with the much more complicated state of affairs in Palestinian epigraphy. But at least we can glance briefly at something else: we can take a look at the ‘dossier of Jewish cultural resilience’ established by Tessa Rajak after Millar’s example,⁹⁶ and compare it with the situation in Syria. There are ten points: 1. the retention of Aramaic, 2. widespread bi- or trilingualism, 3. persistence of a communally protected text, 4. a unique sense of historical continuity, 5. Jerusalem as a focal point, 6. the leadership role of the high priests, 7. Herod’s role as a proponent of Hellenism, 8. the two revolts, 9. the rabbinic status after 70 CE, 10. the erection of synagogues.

Not all, but many of these points are paralleled in Syria. For the period in question, the question of leadership of the high priests is irrelevant, but at least in the fourth century the patriarch and the rabbis were quite a prominent presence. Herod (or any other Jewish dynast) had no role to play as a proponent of Hellenism: Hellenism in Syria was much older than Herod, but the Jewish communities adopted Hellenism only in the cities. Jerusalem was a focal point before 70, as the ossuaries attest, and afterwards the attraction of Eretz Israel itself grew, as is shown by the numerous Syrian burials in Beth She’arim. This change from Jerusalem

chapel for ever. Then the Jews who had gone in to prefer accusations against them took courage and came to fight with the blessed men; since the old man also did not hold aloof from the fight with them, though he did not take it to heart, that is, he was not moved with indignation. When they saw that all hope for their place of worship was lost, and it had now received the form of a church, and the name too of the Blessed one, and they were no longer able to approach it, inasmuch as they had been reinforced by those in whose territory they were settled, they also took fire by night and went and set fire to the old man’s huts, before his disciples separated from him, and burnt them; though perhaps even this also was brought about providentially by the grace of God, in order that the blessed man might have a little breathing-space in his huts, because he was much straitened in them. Then Sergius, because he was an agile and energetic man, rebuilt them firmly in a few days. And, when these men began to build a synagogue, he waited for them till they were on the point of finishing, and he occupied one night in pulling it to pieces stone by stone, and thus he engaged in this contest against the crucifiers before shutting himself up; so that during the days of his life the Jews could not raise their head there. But, when they saw that he had shut himself up, they thought that they were rid of him; and for this reason they went on building confidently; and when they had completed and finished, he sent his disciples by night, and they burnt it; and so they desisted from building all the days of his life.’

⁹⁵ Cf. Millar 2006: 393.

⁹⁶ Rajak 2001: 506–9. with the references to Millar’s work – and some subtle criticism on 508–9.

to Beth She'arim is the only instance in our epigraphic dossier that gives us a glimpse of the consequences of the first revolt, even though we know that the Syrian diaspora was involved and suffered in it.⁹⁷ Retention of Aramaic and bi- or even trilingualism is a self-evident feature of the Syrian diaspora, as is the retention of the Hebrew Bible⁹⁸ – but even if a Syriac translation (the Peshitta) was used by the Jewish communities, the existence and the value of a religious foundation text is not in question. This text serves as the basis for a particular cultural memory and sense of historic continuity, as can be witnessed in the wall paintings of the Dura synagogue. No other diaspora synagogue is better known, but it is only one of many synagogues: the erection of synagogues was common (and the reports of their existence reach us sometimes only when they are destroyed).

Perhaps not all, but the most important indicators of Jewish cultural resilience can be found in Syria – even more marked than in Asia Minor: Jerusalem and the necropolis of Beth She'arim are not as important for Jews of Asia Minor; there is almost no bilingualism and certainly no retention of Aramaic in Asia Minor; the leadership of the high priests or the rabbis is – even in late antiquity – far less marked than in Syria, and there is no tangible evidence that the two revolts had any influence on the situation of the diaspora in Asia Minor. This may be due to a distortion of our evidence, but I believe that Jewish participation in the marketplace of religions was stronger in Asia Minor, at least during the high Empire.

It is no surprise that different parts of the diaspora are characterised by different attitudes to their surroundings. The nearer to Eretz Israel the diaspora communities lived, the nearer they were to the daily use of Aramaic or other Semitic languages, and the farther away they were from an adaptation to the ways of their surroundings. But it is quite interesting to notice that these facts are reflected in the use (or not) of the epigraphic habit, that inscriptions taken as a whole, as a corpus, are able to tell us more than single texts. Even if the epigraphic habit reflects only part of the truth about diaspora communities and their life, it is at least a part of the truth which should not be discounted.

⁹⁷ We cannot discount the idea of a major rise in the number of Jews in Syria as another consequence of the two revolts, but there is no tangible proof – and any new immigrants were added to an already numerous Jewish population.

⁹⁸ Quotations from the Hebrew Bible are to be found on amulets, Syr 4 (Tyros; Deut. 33:26; Num. 10:35); Syr 42 (Damascus [?], Exod. 15:3; Deut. 6:4; 33:26; Num. 10:35); on doorjambs in Palmyra, Syr 44–7 (Deut. 6:4; 7: 14; 7:15; 28:5).

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*Religion and language in Dura-Europos¹**Ted Kaizer*

Dura-Europos was rich in gods and rich in languages. The unique religious and linguistic situation of this fortress town on the Middle Euphrates reflected its vicissitudes. Founded as the Macedonian colony Europos on a plateau overlooking the river, Dura was under Parthian control (with a brief Roman interlude in 116/7 CE) from the late-second century BCE until 165 CE. Lucius Verus' campaigns brought in the Roman troops who, nearly a century later, would be defeated by the Sasanians in 256 CE. Throughout most of the Parthian and Roman phases a large Palmyrene contingent was to be found in the town too. The now legendary excavations from the 1920s and 1930s by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres revealed a wide spectrum of pagan cults, coming from different spheres of influence, in addition to a synagogue (famous because of its unique murals, with their illustrations of scenes from the Hebrew Scriptures) and a Christian house church. Graffiti and inscriptions, as well as the remains of writing on more perishable material, show an even more remarkable diversity of languages and dialects in use, with the classical languages supplemented by Aramaic (including Palmyrenean,² Hatrean and Syriac), Hebrew, Parthian and Middle Persian, and the ancient north Arabian dialect known as Safaitic. Though not one of the grand Levantine cities, Dura-Europos was no marginal outpost either,³ and the abundance of archaeological findings makes it potentially our best case study for social and religious life in a normal Near Eastern small town under the early and high Empire. So far, however, neither the religious life nor the language situation has received the attention that has long been due. The only comprehensive account

¹ I am very grateful to Lucinda Dirven for her critical comments on a draft of this paper, and to Hannah Cotton for asking me to contribute to this volume and subsequently showing so much patience. All remaining errors are of course mine.

² It should be noted that 'Palmyrenean' is used for the language and 'Palmyrene' as a general adjective, and similarly 'Hatrean' vs. 'Hatrene', following Hofstijzer and Jongeling *North-West Semitic*: xiii.

³ Rightly emphasised by Sommer 2005: 331: 'kein marginaler Außenposten'.

of Dura's cults is an article by Bradford Welles from 1969,⁴ and although the parchments and papyri were collected in what swiftly became a classic volume,⁵ the final report on the inscriptions never appeared.⁶

A contribution of this size can of course not pretend to fill the gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of all the relevant material, and my more modest aim is to explore the relationship between the variety of cults and the spread of classical and non-classical languages. In particular, this paper investigates to what degree the adherence to different cults and use of different languages at Dura-Europos actually led to a so-called 'mixed culture', which has often been assumed since the days of Franz Cumont and Michael Rostovtzeff, the scientific directors of the French-American expeditions.

An accessible introduction to the linguistic variety at Dura and its relation to at least some aspects of religious life was provided in the 1960s by George Kilpatrick, although he concentrated on the Jewish and Christian evidence.⁷ Kilpatrick argued that the Durene Jews had strong links with those in Mesopotamia, while, in contrast, the local Christian community originated in the West. Apart from a liturgical text written in Hebrew (on a parchment), the available textual sources from the synagogue consist of inscriptions and graffiti, which are more or less evenly divided among Aramaic (twenty-two), Greek (nineteen) and Persian (twelve Middle Persian, 'Pārsik', and three Parthian, 'Pahlavik').⁸ Most of the Persian ones were written on the wall paintings themselves and record appraisal on the part of visitors from elsewhere. Their presence can be explained by assuming that Mesopotamian Jews had sent someone 'like a consular representative nowadays' to the Euphrates stronghold, in order to approve of the frescos.⁹

As regards the Durene Christians, their house church with baptistery was partly decorated with frescos too, showing stories from both the New and the Old Testament, and contained Greek graffiti and inscriptions. A single graffito from the courtyard, written in Syriac, seems to be the exception that proves the rule.¹⁰ It concerns an ABC in the Estrangela script, and as such fits in well with five other alphabets (all in Greek) which were found

⁴ Welles 1969. ⁵ Welles, Fink and Gilliam 1959.

⁶ See, however, the large collection of material by Frye, Gilliam, Ingholt and Welles 1955.

⁷ Kilpatrick 1964.

⁸ Kraeling 1956: 261–320. For the Hebrew parchment, see Welles, Fink and Gilliam 1959: no. 11.

⁹ The quotation is from Kilpatrick 1964: 220. For the Iranian material, see the collection of photographs by Frye 1968, with the review article by Brunner 1972.

¹⁰ Kraeling 1967: 91, no. 3. In a non-religious context, Syriac is also used in a parchment of a deed of sale composed in Edessa but found at Dura-Europos, and in two parchments from the otherwise Greek archive originating from the Middle Euphrates region. For these texts, see now Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac*: 232–48.

in the Christian building.¹¹ Such texts are generally explained as warding off the evil eye, a phenomenon also encountered in a number of the pagan sanctuaries in the city, and indeed in some secular buildings.¹² The single Syriac graffito led Fergus Millar to state that 'it is enough to suggest that, in a Christian context as in others, third-century Dura was a meeting-point of Greek and Syriac'. In support of this, he also pointed out that the Greek spelling of the names of David (Δαουιδ) and Goliath (Γολιοδ), in the labels identifying the couple on one of the murals, is a reflection of their 'spelling found in Syriac bibles'.¹³ A Syriac inscription found elsewhere, in the temple of Atargatis, has sometimes been connected with the Christian community too. Written in a script that preceded Estrangela, it asks for a man with an indigenous name ('Khalīṣa, son of Sennaq, of Qarha, a disciple of Rama') to be 'remembered before (the) god' (*dkyr qdm 'lh*).¹⁴ Although the original editor argued that the nomenclature pointed to a Christian context, it remains uncertain whether this anonymous god must necessarily be a reference to the Christian one. The fact that it was inscribed on a stele with abstract lunar and solar symbolism, found in a pagan shrine, does not make the case any stronger.¹⁵ In any case, the notion that, generally speaking, Greek was the main language used by the Durene Christians is confirmed by a small fragment of parchment, which has evoked plenty of discussion since its discovery in 1933. The parchment contains fifteen lines of a gospel harmony, which is usually interpreted as the oldest available text of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, although recently a plea has been made to understand the fragment as part of a separate gospel harmony, independent of that of Tatian.¹⁶

As far as the pagan cults are concerned, the linguistic situation at Dura-Europos is more clear-cut than the attestation of numerous languages and dialects seems to imply. First, Greek inscriptions and graffiti are

¹¹ Kraeling 1967: nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 11.

¹² Kraeling 1967: 89–90. Cf. Cumont 1926: 119–20. Alphabets in Greek have been found in the so-called temple 'of the Palmyrene gods' (on the border of the fresco of Julius Terentius), in the temple 'of the Gadde' and in the temple 'of Azzanathkona'. The latter site has also revealed two Latin alphabets.

¹³ Millar *Roman Near East*: 471. Cf. Kraeling 1967: pl. XXII and pl. XLI.1–2. For the inscriptions, see Kraeling 1967: 97, no. 19 (Δαουιδ: 'one of the common transcriptions of the Hebrew name') and no. 20 (Γολιοδ: 'neither an attested or correct transcription of the Hebrew name').

¹⁴ C. C. Torrey in *Rep.* III: 68–71, with pl. XIX, 1, does not give the provenance of the stele, which can be learned only from M. Pillet in the same volume, p. 10. The stele stood in front of an altar dedicated to Atargatis. For the text, see now also Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac*: 191–2.

¹⁵ Cf. Kilpatrick 1964: 221; Millar *Roman Near East*: 468.

¹⁶ Original publication: Kraeling 1935. See Welles, Fink and Gilliam 1959: no. 10. Independent gospel harmony: Parker, Taylor and Goodacre 1999. Most recent defence of Tatian's text, with further references to the debate on the parchment: Joosten 2003.

control unlatched the gates of the city to more new cultural and especially religious elements, the above-noted scheme, of general dominance of Greek in public inscriptions, and the attestation – in its own context – of Palmyrenean as the only other widely used public language, remains unchanged. The one obvious modification is that Latin came to join the linguistic ranks, although almost solely within the military sphere. To what degree the latter was, or could be, used in daily life, in a town which was publicly Greek while many of its inhabitants used an Aramaic dialect colloquially, is anyone's guess. But a fragmentary graffito from a military shrine in the north-eastern part of the town, near the river, shows sufficient sophistication to argue that at least some soldiers knew Latin really well.²⁵ Aramaic, as opposed to its Palmyrenean dialect, started to appear in the Roman period too, but not related to pagan cults. Most notably, it was used in a building inscription from the synagogue, some eleven years prior to the city's capture by the Sasanians.²⁶ Despite its absence in the epigraphic language of the various cults, the potential relevance of Aramaic in the vernacular of pagan religious contexts is hinted at in a Greek inscription from the so-called 'House of Lysias', which records how, on the seventh day of the month Dios in the year 471 (November, 159 CE), Lysias had gone εἰς Βηθειλάαν, using a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic *bt 'lh(y)*, 'house of the god(s)', or just 'temple'.²⁷ Since it is unlikely to have meant any of the Durene shrines (none of which was so particularly distinctive as to merit being singled out as 'the' temple), it is more plausible that Lysias set out to visit one of the larger cult centres in the wider region. He could, for example, have left for Hatra, in northern Mesopotamia, where the large temenos, which contains a number of temples dedicated to various gods, was explicitly called *byt 'lh*, the 'house of the gods', in a Hatrean inscription from 138 CE which records how lord Nasru, father of the later king Sanatruq, had built the walls and gate of the temenos.²⁸ Alternatively, it could be the case that Βηθειλαα was just a place name, as the original editors of the inscription suggested.²⁹ In any case, the evidence for the use of Aramaic in the pagan cults at Dura is, to say the least, rather thin.

²⁵ Frye, Gilliam, Ingholt and Welles 1955: no. 15. ²⁶ Kraeling 1956: 261–8.

²⁷ Frye, Gilliam, Ingholt and Welles 1955: no. 16A.

²⁸ Hatra inscription no. 272, on which most recently Beyer 1998: 79.

²⁹ Frye, Gilliam, Ingholt and Welles 1955: 205–6 (appendix). Note that the companion inscription, no. 16B, reveals that Lysias died on the 22nd of Dios, i.e. fifteen days after his original departure date. Unfortunately, the text does not provide any answer with regard to the location, or nature, of the *Bêtheilaa* for which he left.

In basically all Durene sanctuaries, whether they were built and dominated by Palmyrenes, by Roman soldiers (some of whom were of course Palmyrenes), by descendants of the original Macedonian settlers or by the indigenous population, cultic practice took place along similar lines, with individuals dedicating sacrifices, altars or parts of buildings to their deities. For many shrines our evidence is, unfortunately, too limited to generalise. The temple of Zeus Theos, for example, has revealed only a few inscriptions from the Parthian period, of which the main one, from 120/1 CE, records the dedication of 'the temple and the gates and all the painting of the images' (τὸν ναὸν καὶ τὰ θυρώματα καὶ τὴν τῶν εἰκόνων γραφὴν πᾶσαν) to Zeus Theos (Διὶ Θεῶι) by a certain Seleukos son of Theomnēstos son of Antiochos, who identified himself as Εὐρωπαϊὸς καὶ τῶν πρώτων; another one from 114 CE is by the same dedicant; and a third one from 113/4 CE has the name of Zeus in the genitive on an altar.³⁰ These dated records help us to decide when the shrine was initially built or completed and through whose generosity, but we are left in the dark about the further history of the cult practised inside the temple. In particular, the evidence is not sufficient for us to interpret it as a sanctuary used only by a particular subgroup of society, whether shaped by familial, geographical or occupational links. In four of the subsidiary rooms ovens for the preparation of food have been found, but this does not necessarily limit the temple's supposed clientele.³¹ Zeus Theos does not stand on his own in this regard: there is abundant evidence for gods who did not inhabit the classical pantheon, but whose cult patterns conformed to the general model of religious culture and behaviour in the Greek cities of the Roman east. Thus, the cult of Aphlad focused on a relief of a deity in a cuirass, standing on top of two griffons, with a priestly figure burning incense in front of him, and with a Greek inscription identifying Aphlad as the god of Anath, a village on the Euphrates.³² But the dedicant, who, like his god, also had a non-classical name (Hadadiabos son of Zabdibolos son of Sillos), is said to have made the relief 'as a vow, for his own salvation and that of his children and of his whole house' (εὐχὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτοῦ καὶ τέκνων καὶ τοῦ πάντος οἴκου), applying standard Greco-Roman formulaic language

³⁰ *Rep.* VII/VIII: nos. 886–8. ³¹ Downey 1988: 128.

³² *Rep.* V: 106–12, with pl. XIII, with the inscription at 112, no. 416. The etymology of the divine name has been explained as Akkadian *aplu*, 'son', and Adda, meaning 'son of Hadad', which fits nicely with an Old Assyrian text that connected the son of Hadad with the Middle Euphrates region. See *Rep.* V: 118.

to the worship of Aphlad.³³ Another inscription from the same temple gives a list of names of members of an association who record the erection of an ἀνδρών, a banqueting hall, dedicated to Aphlad,³⁴ thus providing a setting well known in the Greek east for sacred dining and drinking under the auspices of a deity. The fact that the divine name is spelt differently in the texts from the sanctuary (Ἀφλαδ; Ἀφαλαδος; Ἀπαλαδος) clearly reflects that it originated in a different language group and a different cultural sphere of influence. However, at Dura-Europos those adhering to the cult of Aphlad did so in Greek, and later Greco-Roman fashion.

The only substantial group within Durene society which can be followed, at least partly, while playing its role simultaneously on different religious levels within that same society, is that of the Palmyrenes.³⁵ The beginning of their story coincides with the earliest dated written evidence from the site: an inscription from the so-called necropolis temple, situated about 350m outside the city walls, records in Palmyrenean the dedication of a shrine to Bel and Yarhibol.³⁶ It remains unclear who these particular Palmyrene worshippers were, but it is well known that citizens of the Syrian oasis were based at Dura, both as merchants and as archers on behalf of their mother city.³⁷ Palmyrene troops, in whatever capacity, were based at Dura-Europos early on, and seem to have remained there when the period of Roman domination began. It is not until the early third century, however, that we have evidence for the more official cohorts XX Palmyrenorum, which came to form part of the regular garrison of imperial forces at the city, including other auxiliary units and also vexillations of legions stationed elsewhere in the Near East, such as the IV Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma, whose headquarters were in northern Syria, at Zeugma and Samosata respectively.³⁸ It is the cohorts XX Palmyrenorum which has left us the splendid archive of military papyri in Latin, including of course the rightly famous *Feriale Duranum*, a sacrificial calendar recording a combination of imperial anniversaries and festivities with regard to deities from the Roman state cult.³⁹ This calendar would, in itself, never have been sufficient to inform us that the cohort using it was filled with soldiers from nearby Palmyra, and that they continued to pay homage to their ancestral gods at the same time. External evidence, however, leaves no doubt about this. From the so-called temple of the Palmyrene gods, which was frequented by soldiers in its later phases,

³³ On the formula, see now Moralee 2004. ³⁴ *Rep.* V: 114, no. 418, dated to 54 CE.

³⁵ See, above all, Dirven *Palmyrenes*. ³⁶ *PAT*: no. 1067. ³⁷ Most recently, Luther 2004.

³⁸ For all details concerning the period up to the third century, see Gebhardt 2002: 287–91.

³⁹ Welles, Fink and Gilliam 1959: no. 54.

comes a Greek inscription which meticulously describes how the statues of the typically Palmyrene duo Yarhibol and Aglibol ought to be dressed and decorated.⁴⁰ And from the same site comes the famous fresco of the sacrifice by Iulius Terentius, tribune of the cohorts XX Palmyrenorum, leading his soldiers in a sacrifice to three Palmyrene deities, probably Aglibol, Yarhibol and Arsu.⁴¹ But they could also be involved in worship which was neither Roman nor Palmyrene nor indigenous: it is likely that some of them participated in the cult of Mithras, which arrived at Dura-Europos with the Roman army. Although most texts from the mithraeum are in Greek or Latin, there is one bilingual Palmyrenean–Greek inscription which is a ‘good memorial’ (*dkrn ṭb*) set up in 168/9 CE by the strategos (*ṣṭrtg*) Eṭpani, ‘who is in command of the archers who are at Dura’ (*dy ʿl qṣṭ dy bdwr*). The Greek text only names the commander (Ἐθφανεὶ ἱστάρτηγα). It is inscribed on the plinth of the elder of two reliefs (from 168/9 CE) depicting the *tauroctony*, Mithras’ slaying of the bull. Equally, at least two of the dedicants of the relief from a few years later (170/1 CE), who are identified by Greek inscriptions, have names which were very common in Palmyra. The military element in the cult of Mithras at Dura was still going strong in the third century, but – although it is very likely – it cannot be certain that those involved in the later phases were from Palmyra too.⁴²

Palmyrenes at Dura-Europos, as elsewhere in the Roman world, are recognisable to us through their own local Aramaic dialect with its distinctive script, and also through the worship of typically Palmyrene gods. In addition, we are able to follow some of their religious activities in their specific capacity as Roman soldiers, because we happen to know that the *Feriale Duranum* was used by the cohorts XX Palmyrenorum. There is, on the other hand, of course no means which would allow us to assess the cultic behaviour of those Palmyrenes who recorded their dedications to non-Palmyrene gods in Greek inscriptions. But that does not mean that such interaction did not take place.⁴³ We know from elsewhere in the Roman world that Palmyrene expatriates could indeed integrate well in local society. The lack of hard evidence at Dura-Europos, or rather our inability to interpret it correctly, can be explained quite simply. In Roman Dacia, for example, Palmyrenes were actively involved in the running of the towns in which they eventually settled after retirement from military

⁴⁰ Cumont 1926: no. 12, with Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 311–3.

⁴¹ Cumont 1926: 89–114 with pls. XLIX–LI. Cf. Kaizer 2006.

⁴² Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 260–72.

⁴³ See Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 194: ‘it is precisely because these people became integrated into the religion of their surroundings that such cases are bound to escape our notice’.

service. And often they set up inscriptions in Latin which did not mention their ancestral gods (although there are of course examples for this too). However, in Sarmizegetusa and the other Dacian towns where Palmyrene *numeri* played a prominent role in the policing of the Roman province, Palmyrenes were instantly recognisable through their nomenclature.⁴⁴ It would be a surprise indeed if the large contingent of their compatriots at Dura-Europos had not similarly produced any town councillors or other civic magistrates who set up inscriptions in Greek with no reference to their ancestral deities. As regards Dura, however, it is often impossible to decide whether a Semitic name known through its transliteration in a Greek inscription was actually that of a Palmyrene, rather than of an indigenous Durene or of an inhabitant of one of the villages along the Middle Euphrates, unless there is additional information to corroborate a transliterated Semitic name in order to identify the respective person positively as a Palmyrene. The fact that those in possession of Roman citizenship (not of course soldiers from the auxiliary unit) will have been able to sport their *tria nomina* as an alternative to the indigenous nomenclature which they could preserve, makes it even harder to decide unequivocally how worshippers ought to be defined and how they would have identified themselves under different circumstances.⁴⁵ Since Greek is, together with Palmyrenean Aramaic, one of the two 'Palmyrene languages' (and often used as the single language in inscriptions set up in the Syrian oasis itself), these postulated invisible Palmyrenes at Dura-Europos cannot be said to have acted contrary to the epigraphic habits of their hometown: they just did not make any attempt to emphasise their distinctive status as Palmyrenes. But neither did they necessarily hide it.

As regards the Palmyrenean inscriptions from Dura-Europos, they are sometimes bilingual with Greek, as in Palmyra itself.⁴⁶ In the case of one graffito a Palmyrenean text is transcribed in Greek characters, possibly recording an instruction to adorn a divine image with two golden objects according to the religious calendar (θαρθην γοβινυ δααβαι(ι) βιδ σαλμα βα Νισαν αα Βαρζακιη).⁴⁷ Recent studies have shown that, although there are indeed a number of examples to the contrary, in most bilingual inscriptions the two languages employed are composed more or less

⁴⁴ Bianchi 1987; Sanie 1989; Kaizer 2004a.

⁴⁵ On questions of nomenclature and identity at Dura-Europos, see now Sommer 2004a; Sommer 2004b.

⁴⁶ Originally published by du Mesnil du Buisson 1939, they were included in *PAT* nos. 1067–121, and commented upon by Dirven *Palmyrenes* in the appendix.

⁴⁷ *PAT* no. 1117, with Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 310–1, for different interpretations.

independently. Only seldom is it clear that one is a direct translation from the other.⁴⁸ But while in Palmyra itself bilingual inscriptions appear less frequent in the religious sphere than for example in honorific contexts, at Dura the few bilinguals we have (outnumbered as they are though by the Palmyrenean texts) all relate to cultic issues. Here in Dura, as elsewhere abroad, bilingual inscriptions may have had different functions from the ones they had in the hometown, although – in addition to context and target audience – personal choice on the part of the dedicant will have been the key element in deciding which language(s) to use. Each different language, with its own idiom, could contribute to emphasising, or even transforming, specific aspects of a cultic system. Palmyrenean, like imperial Aramaic, only sporadically expressed explicitly that a vow or a divine injunction was the reason behind a dedication. Instead, in Palmyra it was the dedicant's gratitude which was emphasised, both in Aramaic and in Greek. But in Dura-Europos, a military tribune with a Roman name transliterated in Greek (Σκρειβώνιος Μουκιανὸς χιλίαρχος) erected an altar in the so-called temple 'of the Palmyrene gods' to the Palmyrene deity Yarhibol, following the latter's command (κατὰ κέλευσιν).⁴⁹ Without seeking to press the point too far, the use of different languages may have affected how certain religious aspects were expressed or emphasised in different situations.⁵⁰ These same patterns are also visible in the bilingual inscription on a slightly damaged relief of Nemesis, found at the so-called Palmyrene gate. One of the few Palmyrenean–Greek texts from Dura-Europos, it records a dedication to this classical goddess:⁵¹

Θεᾷ Νεμέσι Ἰούλιος Αὐρήλιος Μαλωχᾶς
Σουδαίου Παλμυρηνὸς εὐξάμενος ἀνέθηκεν

Julius Aurelius Malochas, son of Soudaios, Palmyrene, set this up in gratitude to the goddess Nemesis.

'bd wmw'd' m'lw' br šwdy tdmry' lnm'sy
šnt 556

Maloka son of Shudai, Palmyrene, made (this), and with gratitude, for Nemesis. The year 556 [244–5 CE].

The dedicant shows his *tria nomina* only in the Greek part, but emphasises his status as a Palmyrene both in Greek and in Palmyrenean. As regards

⁴⁸ Palmyrene bilingualism is discussed by Taylor 2002: 317–24; Yon 2002: 23–36; Kaizer 2002: 27–34; and Gzella 2005. On the relation between Palmyrenean and Latin, see especially the relevant sections in the magisterial study by Adams *Bilingualism*: 248–64.

⁴⁹ *Rep.* II: 90, no. 3. ⁵⁰ Kaizer 2004b: 180–3.

⁵¹ *PAT* no. 1078. The relief is Dirven *Palmyrenes*: pl. XVI, with discussion at 327–31.

the goddess, she is depicted on the relief with her standard attributes according to classical iconography, measuring rod, wheel and griffin, while she pulls her veil downwards in an apotropaic gesture. Although she did receive some worship in Palmyrene contexts, there is hardly any evidence save a few *tesserae* for the presence of her cult in Palmyra itself.⁵² In contrast to the common Palmyrene practice, which had most deities keeping their indigenous, non-classical names not only in Palmyrenean, but also in Greek (or, in Africa and Dacia, Latin) transliteration, the divine name Nemesis is the only instance of the exact opposite: *nmsys* is the Aramaic transliteration of the Greek name. Whether that means that she therefore automatically continued to be conceived of as a 'Greek import' in the religious world of the Palmyrenes is another matter: important evidence for her cult comes also from the Palmyrene countryside, an area generally understood to have undergone a low degree of classical influence. In the Greek town of Dura-Europos, her well-known iconography would have made the goddess on the relief immediately recognisable. The fact that the dedicant added a bilingual inscription says therefore more about himself than about Nemesis. But the transliteration of the divine name in Palmyrenean certainly helped to make her a 'Palmyrene' goddess too.

How different, then, is the situation with regard to Hatrenes at Dura-Europos. First, the evidence is of course extremely limited,⁵³ so much so that it is usually overlooked in the context of religion at Dura. Two of the four 'texts' are nothing but a personal name, one (originally interpreted as a Safaitic graffito) inscribed in the Palmyrene gate and one found in the surroundings of the temple of Aphlad. But the other two are more interesting. One is a graffito scratched on the wall of a house, and containing the divine names of the members of the triad of Hatra, consisting of Maren, Marten and Bar-Maren, 'Our Lord, Our Lady, and the Son of Our Lord and Our Lady'.⁵⁴ This divine family takes first place in the inscriptions from Hatra itself, all of them written in the local Aramaic dialect, and is worshipped both in the temples inside the central temple complex and in most of the minor shrines spread throughout that city.⁵⁵ But whereas in Hatra, Greek is as good as absent,⁵⁶ the Hatrean mention of the triad in Dura-Europos is accompanied by a Greek graffito which seems to give

⁵² For a general discussion of the Palmyrene cult of Nemesis, with further references, see Kaizer 2001.

⁵³ Bertolino 1997. Cf. Leriche and Bertolino 1997.

⁵⁴ Bertolino 1997: no. 1; Originally published by Cumont 1926: 447–9, nos. 129–30. Cf. Milik 1972: 334–7.

⁵⁵ Kaizer 2000.

⁵⁶ With the exception of Greek graffiti from the area of the north gate and a heavily damaged bilingual Greek–Hatrean inscription, all of which at present remain unfortunately unpublished.

the transliteration of the divine names (Μαρεῖνος (twice mentioned), Μαρε[θαν] or Μαρε[θ]εν (according to different readings), and Μαρεῖνος υἱ[ος αὐτοῦ]). Second, the above-mentioned bilingual inscription from the temple of Atargatis records both in Hatrean and in Greek a gift of money to the Sun god (*šmš' ʾlh'/θεν Ἡλίου*).⁵⁷ Again, Greek is added to Hatrean in order to make one of the most important deities of Hatra accessible to the inhabitants of Dura-Europos: whereas the triad is most often mentioned in Hatrean inscriptions, the city of Hatra was believed to have been under the direct protection of the Sun god Shamash.⁵⁸ The financial contribution that the dedicant of the bilingual inscription had made to Shamash could well refer to money given to the large temple complex in Hatra, where such commemoration was a common practice.⁵⁹ According to this interpretation (which can of course not be proven), the dedicant was apparently unable to set up an inscription in his hometown, and chose to do so instead in Dura-Europos, where he was either residing or passing through. In default of a proper temple of the Sun at Dura-Europos, he placed a record of his pious donation in one of the town's many local shrines. We should probably not make too much of the fact that it ended up in the temple of Atargatis, but it shows nicely an often ignored aspect of the polytheistic world of the classical Levant, where in most sanctuaries various deities could receive a cult, partly at the whim of those who chose to worship them.⁶⁰ For obvious reasons, the dedicant from Hatra opted to add a Greek counterpart to his local Aramaic dialect: whereas a Palmyrenean inscription could be read by other Palmyrenes, there is no evidence for a large community of Hatrenes in the town. Whether the record of his gift in the temple of Atargatis actually served to enhance the divine world of Dura-Europos as such is another matter.

Even more scanty is the Safaitic evidence from the town. Whereas at Palmyra (unpublished) Safaitic graffiti were inscribed in the temple of the goddess Allat,⁶¹ all but one of the few from Dura come from the Palmyrene gate. The one exception was found in the surroundings of the

⁵⁷ Bertolino 1997: no. 4. See above, n. 20.

⁵⁸ Cassius Dio states (68.31.2) that the Sun god, to whom the city was consecrated (τοῦ Ἡλίου ὅπερ πού καὶ ἀνάκειται), helped to protect Hatra when she was under siege. See Kaizer 2000: 232–5, for further references.

⁵⁹ Hatra inscriptions nos. 191, 202q, 225, 240, 244–6, for which see Beyer 1998, who follows the same numbering.

⁶⁰ Note also the above-mentioned stele with its abstract lunar and solar symbolism, accompanied by an inscription written in classical Syriac, which was also found in the temple of Atargatis. See above, n. 14.

⁶¹ Drijvers 1976: 34.

temple of Aphlad, so it is worth quoting Macdonald's translation of it: 'by S²m son of Bgd of the lineage of M'gm', and he longed for *Hdt* and for *Gbt* of the patrol of N'm.'⁶² Although it is the longest and most interesting Safaitic text found at Dura, it can hardly be said to add to our understanding of religious life in the fortress. Instead, one may safely assume that those responsible for the Safaitic inscriptions paid homage to the gods with which they were familiar, according to the thousands of graffiti found in the basalt deserts of southern Syria and northern Jordan. Evidence from Dura-Europos itself, however, is lacking.

'Dura-Europos' is a modernism. Our evidence refers to the town either as Europos, the name of the Macedonian colony, or as Dura, its indigenous name. The names of the site are of some relevance for its religious life, since we have references in Latin, Greek and Palmyrenean to a deity who served as its divine city protector. The first of these is a Palmyrenean inscription dated to 159 CE, on a relief from the so-called temple of the Gadde, showing a bearded god, seated between two eagles, who is identified as the 'Gad of Dura' (*gd' dy dur'*). He is crowned by Dura's legendary founder Seleucus Nicator, also identified in Palmyrenean (*slwqws nyqtwr*).⁶³ Aramaic 'Gad' is the equivalent of Greek *Tyche*, and matches it above all in its capacity as protector of a city.⁶⁴ However, whereas the companion relief from the temple of the Gadde shows the 'Gad of Tadmor' (the indigenous name of Palmyra) in the form of a traditional Greek city goddess, seated on a throne alongside a lion, wearing a mural crown and with one foot on the representation of the city's river (or spring, in the case of Palmyra),⁶⁵ it is clear that the 'Gad of Dura' does not follow the classical scheme. This classical scheme *is*, however, followed for the iconographical representation of Dura's Tyche on the above-mentioned fresco of the sacrifice by the Palmyrene tribune Iulius Terentius, from the temple of the Palmyrene gods, which dates to the 230s.⁶⁶ At the bottom left of the painting, under the three gods who are the recipients of the sacrifice by Terentius and his soldiers, two city protectresses with *corona muralis* are seated, labelled in paint in Greek as the Τύχη Παλμύρων and the Τύχη Δούρας. Interestingly, whereas the Greek counterpart of the 'Gad of Tadmor' is named after the Greek name of that city, Palmyra, the 'Gad of Dura' – despite changing gender – has its opposite number in the 'Tyche of Dura', *not* in a 'Tyche of Europos'.

⁶² Macdonald 2005: 123–6.

⁶³ *PAT* no. 1094, with *Rep.* VII/VIII: pl. XXXIII. Cf. Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 230 and 245–7, with pl. III.

⁶⁴ See Kaizer 1997 and 1998; Belayche 2003.

⁶⁵ See Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 231 and 247–53, with pl. IV. ⁶⁶ See above, n. 41.

Indeed, the indigenous name of the town is even used in the Latin variant on the theme, in a late second-century inscription on an altar found in one of the city gates, which records how two veterans of the cohorts II Ulpiae Paphlagonum Commodianae redeemed their vows to the 'Genius of Dura' (*Genio Dura*).⁶⁷ It is of course more than likely that the descendants of the original Macedonian settlers would have referred to the divine protectress of their town as the 'Tyche of Europolis', but there is no evidence for this. The fact remains that Palmyrenes, whether writing for their own community in Palmyrenean in the mid-second century, or for a wider (military) audience in Greek in the early third, chose to identify this deity as looking after 'Dura', and so did veterans from a non-Palmyrene unit when writing in Latin in the late second century. This may be relevant for our understanding of the impact of the official civic cults of Dura-Europolis on other patterns of worship in the town. On the one hand, these inscriptions match the assumption that 'Dura' came more into vogue from the end of the second century CE.⁶⁸ On the other hand, not only had 'Europolis' been the official designation since the days of its foundation and long after – the town was for example referred to in 134 CE in a Greek papyrus recording a loan as 'Europolis towards Arabia' (ἐν Εὐρωπῶ τῇ πρὸς Ἀραβίᾳ)⁶⁹ – but, in a process of highlighting the fortress' Macedonian origins, official documents could, as late as 254 CE, when it had become a Roman colonia, refer to it as the 'colony of the Europeans of Seleukos Nikator' (κωλονεία Εὐρωπαϊῶν Σελεύκου Νεικάτορος).⁷⁰

That the Macedonian colony Europolis was founded at a site which had been called Dura ('fortress') since time immemorial is clear from an Old Babylonian tablet, which was re-used in the wall of the temple of Atargatis, and contains the indigenous name of the town (*Da-ma-ra*, pronounced as *Da-wa-ra*).⁷¹ The fact that this document, which clearly had lost all its relevance by the time it was re-used, is the only trace of cuneiform at Dura-Europolis raises the issue of the absence of Akkadian in this small town on the borders of Mesopotamia. In a way, this is not surprising at all, as Akkadian is equally not attested in Palmyra, some

⁶⁷ *Rep.* I: 42.

⁶⁸ Scholten 2005: 21. Note that Macdonald 2005: 119–21, reads 'Dura' as the town's name in a Safaitic inscription: '(written) by Gṯm' at Dūrā' (*lgtm' b-dury*). Unfortunately, the Safaitic inscriptions cannot be dated precisely.

⁶⁹ Welles, Fink and Gilliam 1959: no. 22.

⁷⁰ Welles, Fink and Gilliam 1959: no. 32, an act of divorce written for a soldier of the legio IV Scythica. Referred to by Welles 1969: 53, as an 'archaizing revival'.

⁷¹ Published with commentary by Stephens 1937.

of whose major cults originated in a Mesopotamian sphere of influence, nor even at Hatra, a city where the great temple was named after the famous Esangila temple of Marduk in Babylon.⁷² But in Babylon itself the language is still attested in the second half of the first century CE, on astronomical tablets, and it has even been argued, rather provocatively, that cuneiform did not die out in the Near East until the third century.⁷³ As far as the evidence is concerned, however, Akkadian was not in use in Dura, even if at least some of the town's priests were depicted on frescos as wearing long white dresses and conical headgear, in typically Oriental fashion. But many other languages and dialects were, in a variegated cultic landscape, and this (combined with the site's state of preservation), makes Dura-Europos our best test case for the study of cultural and linguistic developments in the classical Levant outside the larger cities.

Throughout its history, Dura-Europos saw a notable growth in cosmopolitan cultural and religious elements, especially in the Roman period, when they followed in the tracks of the imperial divisions. But only seldom did this result in what could properly be called the mixed culture of a Greco-Semitic civilisation. The use of Palmyrenean and Latin, though well attested, remained restricted to specific sections of the population, with only Greek functioning as the veritable lingua franca of the town. Whether Greek language and culture was, therefore, merely a superficial veneer, or, in contrast, indeed provided a common link among the various sanctuaries and their cults, must remain open to debate. But it could certainly be argued from the available evidence that different cultic practices continued more or less independently, in different but parallel religious universes, so to speak. This will have been, at least partly, due to the absence of a central temple complex which could have served to unite more intensively the various sectors of society on a religious level. Where

⁷² Kaizer 2000: 235.

⁷³ Geller 1997. Not all the evidence, however, is unequivocal. The author of the now lost Greek novel *Babyloniaka*, known to us as Iamblichus – who, according to his own account (as paraphrased by Photius in the *Bibliotheka* 94), lived and wrote in the second half of the second century – is said to have been a Babylonian who studied magical arts and also had a Greek education. But according to a *scholion* written by the tenth-century scribe of the oldest manuscript of Photius' *Bibliotheka*, possibly reflecting a more scrutinised and hence trustworthy reading of the original novel than that by the ninth-century scholar himself, Iamblichus was a native Syrian familiar with his indigenous language, until a Babylonian tutor taught him 'the Babylonian language, customs and stories' (Βαβυλωνίαν τε γλώσσαν καὶ ἥθη λόγους). Considering that the *Babyloniaka*, although set in a Near Eastern context, is first and foremost a Greek novel, it is not certain that we may take the autobiographical details of its author at face value, rather than interpreting them as part of the literary construction. The *scholion's* historicity is called into question by Millar *Roman Near East*: 489–91, but accepted by Geller 1997: 50 (both quoting the scholiast's note in full).

the temple of Bel at Palmyra was also known by its citizens as the 'house of their gods',⁷⁴ and where the sanctuaries situated within the enormous temenos in the middle of Hatra functioned as a religious focal point for the inhabitants of the city and its surroundings as a whole,⁷⁵ patterns of worship which could be called 'civic' are much harder to distinguish at Dura-Europos (in any case as far as its religious topography is concerned), though that is not to say that religious life in the Euphrates fortress was of an exclusive character.⁷⁶ First and foremost, the traditional polytheistic divine world of Dura-Europos, whether classical or indigenous, found expression in Greek, and it is that dominance of Greek in public and religious inscriptions that makes the town at the same time representative for the Roman Near East as a whole.

ADDENDUM

Bertolino 2004 [2007], a convenient collection of all known Semitic inscriptions from Dura-Europos, was published too late to be taken into account, and I have not been able to cross-refer to it throughout my paper.

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⁷⁴ E.g. *PAT* nos. 0269 and 1353, with Kaizer 2002: 67–79.

⁷⁵ Kaizer 2000: 231 and 236–9.

⁷⁶ Kaizer (in press). Note, however, that Dirven *Palmyrenes*: 121–2, referred to the temple of Zeus Megistos as a 'major civic shrine'.

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IV

*Linguistic metamorphoses and
continuity of cultures*

*On the margins of culture: the practice
of transcription in the ancient world*

Jonathan J. Price and Shlomo Naeh

DYING LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTIC SEAMS

Dozens of languages were spoken in the ancient world during the period stretching from the Hellenistic to the Islamic conquests. There were far fewer writing systems than spoken languages, which means that not every language had a cognate script, and many died out before ever being written down.¹ But for those languages with a tradition and formalised system of writing, the connection between language and script was strong. Long integral texts written in the script of another language are a medieval phenomenon; they were not produced as a mainstream cultural activity in antiquity. The concept of separating language from script was not entirely absent, but it is our thesis that a transcribed text invariably indicates marginality or liminality of some kind: a language or script which is dying, an individual on a cultural/linguistic seam, a peripheral medium such as magic, a scholastic exercise. These exceptional cases constitute the first part of the current investigation. In the second part, we shall examine the more complex instance of rabbinical traditions regarding the scripts and languages used in writing biblical books.

In antiquity, it seems, language and script were thought of generally as a unit, to the extent that reference to a particular system of 'letters' or 'writing' could signify the literary or even the spoken language itself. For example, when Herodotus relates (4.87) that Darius set up two stelae on the Bosphoros, ἐνταμῶν γράμματα ἐς μὲν τὴν Ἀσσύρια, ἐς δὲ τὴν Ἑλληνικά, he of course means not strictly two scripts but two languages, i.e. a bilingual inscription in Aramaic and Greek, each written in its cognate script. Similarly, when Thucydides records (4.50.2) that the Athenians intercepted a letter from the Persian King to the Spartans and τὰς μὲν ἐπιστολὰς μεταγραφάμενοι ἐκ τῶν

¹ And in the case of Arabic, it was written down in other scripts until receiving its own regularised script, see Ryckmans 1984; Contini 1987 [1990]; Macdonald 2000.

Ἀσσυρίων γραμμάτων ἀνέγνωσαν, he means nothing more than that the intercepted communication was written in the Aramaic language using the Aramaic script, and was translated into Greek and read out.² This point has not always been intuitively understood: Gomme, in his authoritative commentary on Thucydides, was misled by the expression μεταγραφάμενοι ἐκ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων to suggest that the dispatch 'was written in the Persian language and the cuneiform script',³ although the absurdity of this suggestion was quickly recognised.⁴ Just as the verb μεταγράφειν (esp. in middle voice) can signify translation and not just transcription, so Ἀσσύρια γράμματα can signify the Aramaic language and not just its alphabetic forms. In fact, the expression Ἀσσύρια γράμματα became a standard way for Greek authors to refer to the Aramaic language,⁵ without distinction between the spoken language and its writing system.

The close association of language and script continued into the Roman period. Livy mentions an altar dedicated by Hannibal *cum ingenti rerum ab se gestarum titulo Punicis Graecisque litteris insculpto* (28.46.16), a great bilingual inscription in Punic and Greek carved in the two cognate scripts, and elsewhere (40.29.1) records the interesting story of the discovery in 181 BCE of two stone chests beneath the Janiculum, each inscribed *litteris Latinis Graecisque*, i.e. in Latin and Greek, each in its cognate script. In his edict to the Tyrians of 42 or 41 BCE, M. Antonius instructed the Tyrians to record his previous edict regarding restoration of Jewish captives and property 'in Latin and Greek letters', i.e. in the Latin and Greek languages.⁶ This is no different from Julius Caesar's earlier instructions to the Sidonians to set up his decree confirming Hyrcanus' position 'in Greek and Latin', by which it was understood unambiguously that the languages would be written in their own scripts; for in the decree by Caesar which Josephus quotes immediately after, instructions are given to publish the text in bronze tablets engraved 'in Latin and Greek characters'.⁷ It was unquestioned – and unquestionable – that when an

² Whether the translation was first written down in Greek letters or merely read out in spontaneous translation is not relevant here.

³ Gomme 1956: 498.

⁴ See Hornblower 1996: ad loc., with earlier bibliography, and see also Lewis 1977: 2–3, n. 3; Momigliano 1971: 9.

⁵ Steiner 1993: 80–2. Löw 1871: 58–60; Friedrich 1950; Nylander 1968; Schmitt-Saarbrücken 1992; and compare the instances in rabbinic literature listed in nn. 79–82 below.

⁶ Jos. *AJ* 14.319: Antonius instructed the Tyrians to see to it *ἵνα αὐτὸ εἰς τὰς δημοσίας ἐντάξητε δέλτους γράμμασι Ῥωμαϊκοῖς καὶ Ἑλληνικοῖς*.

⁷ Jos. *AJ* 14.191: βούλομαι δὲ καὶ ἑλληνιστὶ καὶ Ῥωμαῖστί ἐν δέλτῳ χαλκῇ τοῦτο ἀνατεθῆναι. *AJ* 14.197: χαλκῇ δέλτον ταῦτα περιέχουσιν... ἐγκεχαράγμεν γράμμασιν Ῥωμαϊκοῖς

inscription was ordered in the 'letters' of two different languages, the languages themselves were meant.

The habit of referring to a language solely by its script is evidenced in other ancient cultures as well. The so-called Demotic Chronicle, a papyrus from the third century BCE, relates that '[Darius I] wrote the words . . . of the laws of Egypt and they wrote a copy in a papyrus roll in script of Assyria and script of epistles'. Darius I, king of Persia 521–486 BCE, who is known from Diodorus Siculus (1.95.4–5) as the last of the lawgivers in Egypt, codified existing law in Egypt in order to stabilise the region and consolidate Persian rule there after the catastrophic rule of his crazy predecessor Cambyses. The code of Egyptian laws was written in the demotic language in demotic script ('script of epistles') and in the Aramaic language in Aramaic letters ('script of Assyria')⁸ – in other words, in the local Egyptian language and in the imperial language, each in its own cognate script. Not only was there no thought of writing either language in the other script (which could have been justified in the case of a law code), but reference to each language's alphabet was sufficient to refer to the languages themselves.

The above examples offer sufficient demonstration of the close and even intimate association of a language and its script, so that the mention of one naturally referred to the other as well. This may seem intuitive and unexceptional, but the strength of the connection could sometimes produce curious situations. A living instance can be found in one of the Greek letters of the so-called Bar Kokhba archive (*P.Yadin* 52). The crucial lines of the letter are read by its most recent editor, Hannah Cotton, as follows:⁹

...ἐγράφη
δ[ἐ] 'Ελληνεστὶ διὰ
τ[ὸ] [ῆ]μας μὴ εὐρη-
κ[ε]ῖναι 'Εβραεστὶ.

It [the letter] was written in Greek because of our inability (to write) in Jewish letters.

τε καὶ Ἑλληνικοῖς. See Pucci Ben Zeev 1998: 36, with bibliography on bilingual Greek and Latin inscriptions in general. Suetonius, *Caes.* 81.1 specified that a certain prophetic bronze tablet was inscribed *litteris verbisque Graecis* because it could have been thought that such a tablet, like a magical amulet, would have been written in one language in the characters of another.

⁸ Text: Bibl. Nat. (Paris), *Pap.dem.* 215 v. Translation: Spiegelberg 1914; see Reich 1933; Bresciani 1985: 507–8.

⁹ The text above is taken from Cotton 2003: 144 which is a revised reading of Cotton in Yadin, Greenfield, Yardeni and Levine *Documents*: 354. Our interpretation has now been adopted by Cotton, see Cotton 2005.

If it is correct to see the author of this letter as a Nabataean writing to a Jew, then he is excusing himself for his inability to write in the Jewish Aramaic script, which was indeed quite different from the Nabataean Aramaic script. A Jew would not have been able to read the Nabataean characters unless he had taken the pains to learn them. Thus the author of the letter chose to write in Greek, the *lingua franca* of the east which both he and his addressee knew. However, Nabataeans and Jews in Palestine spoke mutually comprehensible Aramaic. When they met, it would have been natural for them to converse in Aramaic – thus writing this communication in Greek was strange and had to be excused or explained. But what is important here is what the Nabataean did not do: he did not write their common language, Aramaic, in Greek script. The author of the letter seems to feel instinctively that if he uses the Greek alphabet, he must also use the language associated with that alphabet. Thus the letter is written Ἑλληνεῖς, in Greek using Greek letters. He is not unaware of the separability of language and script, for he says that he cannot write Ἑβραεῖς, ‘using *Jewish* writing’, by which he means just the Jewish Aramaic script; but he does not conceive of separating language from script in actual writing practice: he will forfeit the more familiar language if he cannot write it in its cognate script.

Although *bilingualism* was common in antiquity, *biliteracy* was rarer. Well-educated Romans like Cicero read and wrote Greek and Latin with equal fluency and quoted literature and common Greek phrases in Greek script;¹⁰ and upper-class orientals like Josephus read and wrote Greek and their native languages in their cognate scripts. But many, probably most bilinguals were monoliterate or illiterate. People generally wrote only those languages whose cognate scripts they knew.

The possibility – both in conception and in practice – of separating a language from its script, and in fact writing one language possessing its own cognate script in the script of another, is of course attested in many ancient texts, ranging in length from a single transcribed¹¹ word to whole sentences and formulae in epitaphs and graffiti, to somewhat longer, exceptional compositions. Yet, to repeat our thesis, writing free compositions in the script of another language never became a mainstream

¹⁰ On the bilingualism of Romans in Cicero’s age, see Dubuisson 1992; Fantham 1996: 24; and now Adams *Bilingualism*: esp. 308.

¹¹ Transcribed, not transliterated: strictly speaking, transcription involves the phonetic representation of one language in the alphabet of another, while transliteration involves a one-to-one correspondence between the letters of two alphabets.

practice in ancient cultures. Transcribed texts were produced invariably for a special purpose or under special (sometimes desperate) circumstances; they certainly were not a product of regular literary activity or a standard cultural habit to the end of Greco-Roman antiquity. That would change in the Middle Ages.

The following discussion will centre on transcribed texts as an indicator of cultural and/or social marginality. Since the body of material which could be taken into account is vast, we have excluded from detailed consideration the following categories of texts:

1. Single transcribed words and brief, highly formulaic phrases, loan-words, brief citations (e.g. *talitha kumi*). These are like fossils embedded in a language, teaching little about the writer's linguistic knowledge or writing habits, or about the theory and practice of transcription. Jewish inscriptions – the richest source for this sort of material – frequently render single Hebrew words and expressions in Greek, e.g. *σαλωμ*,¹² *ἀμην σελα*, *αἰζῶνα* (חַזֵּן), *χωην* (כֹּהֵן), etc.; they reveal neither knowledge of Hebrew, nor the ability to read or pronounce Hebrew (like-wise with the inclusion of actual Hebrew phrases like *שלום על ישראל* in Aramaic letters on Jewish epitaphs), nor any theory or practice of transliteration of the holy language.¹³ Not only is this material too unwieldy to treat systematically here, but it represents a different phenomenon from the one under investigation.
2. Transcriptions of foreign names and toponyms, and technical terms and foreign expressions in literature. Roman writers like Appian wrote Latin technical terms related to Roman institutions in Greek script, and orientals like Josephus wrote Semitic expressions in Greek transcription, but there is an essential difference between quoting an untranslatable term or short phrase and transcribing a literary text.
3. Magical texts. An ever-growing body of amulets, curse-tablets (*defixiones*), bowls, and other objects with inscribed incantations, has illuminated the widespread practice of magic in antiquity. Many of these texts involve an incantation written in one language and

¹² Cf. for instance the many examples of Shalom spelled in Greek at Beth She'arim, Schwabe and Lifshitz 1974: nos. 21, 25, 28, 72, 91. Noy 1993: 96 comments that since *שלום* was transcribed it should be 'regarded as something different from *εὐρησθαι*'.

¹³ For which see below, pp. 277–86; further examples in Rahmani *Ossuaries*: 13 n. 16. Less frequently, Greek appears in Aramaic characters, such as *קֹהֲרִיָּה בֹתָה* (κύριε βοήθει!) or *שִׁמִּי* (τιμι); see, respectively, Kaplan 1974–5; *CII* 1197; Naveh 1978: no. 58 (Hebr.). Transcription of Greek is rarer since many Greek words became absorbed into normal usage in Aramaic, such as *קִירִיס* and *קִירָא* = κύριος, κυρία. See below for discussion of an inscription from Venosa using transcribed Greek, and for other possible examples see *CII* 828, 856, 857, 981.

transcribed in the alphabet of another. There seem to be few rules or regularities. Texts can be partially or wholly transcribed, can aim for phonetic precision or reveal surprising vulgarity, and can seemingly be transcribed from practically any language into the script of any other: Greek, Latin and Aramaic are common in various combinations,¹⁴ but there are also examples of Aramaic in Coptic script, Aramaic in cuneiform (Nipur) and Canaanite in Aramaic, Oscan in Latin, Greek in demotic. The person who ordered the incantation – and even the person who wrote it – did not have to understand the meaning of the words, or even the language associated with the script he was writing, in order for the magic to be effective. The reason for the transcription could be to allow precise pronunciation of foreign magical formulae, or, conversely, to endow the incantation with the magical potency of the letters, which was enhanced by the foreign script into which the words were encoded¹⁵ – so that unintelligibility in these cases was, to a degree, desired. Magical texts were written as modes of communication not with other people but with other realms, and thus by no means represent a regular literary practice or mainstream cultural phenomenon in antiquity.

4. Origen's *Hexapla*, which was produced in a rarefied scholarly setting for other scholars. We shall indeed consider unusual scholastic exercises below, but the myriad linguistic problems associated with the *secunda* are beyond the scope of the present inquiry, nor do they affect our conclusions.
5. Finally, we shall not attempt seriously to consider phonetics and other data bearing on the question of the 'level' of the language evidenced in the inscriptions and papyri (which are the main source for transcribed texts), although these issues are of course crucial for understanding the practice of transcription in its entirety.

DYING LANGUAGES

The pressing need to preserve a dying language, its script, or both, can explain an unusual group of Akkadian and Sumerian tablets, dating from the first and second centuries CE, written in cuneiform on one side and Greek transcription of the original text on the other. These texts were produced by the last generations of priestly scribes in Mesopotamia,

¹⁴ Still useful is the corpus by Audollent 1904, and for Greek texts see Brashear 1995: esp. 3576–603.

¹⁵ See e.g. Frankfurter 1994.

who knew how to read and write Akkadian and Sumerian in the specialised, alphabetic cuneiform script. This knowledge disappeared when the Babylonian temples and their cults finally disappeared in the third century CE.

The main editor of the tablets, M. J. Geller,¹⁶ in support of his extreme theory that a language is not dead so long as one person still knows and actively uses it, identified the texts as scholastic exercises, which was all the proof he needed of the enduring knowledge of cuneiform until a surprisingly late date. Yet this explanation, while sufficient for dating the death of a script and its associated languages, does not account fully for the historical ramifications of this small group of curious texts (eighteen have been published).¹⁷ Cuneiform had been in use for 3,000 years, had once been the dominant script in Mesopotamia and had been widely used in all transactions, but by the time the Greek transcriptions were produced it had apparently become confined to the limited ritual functions of a shrinking temple cult. The Babylonian priests were doubtless responding to a need greater than mere technical instruction when they transcribed those few texts into one of the dominant foreign phonetic scripts of their time (which had not even existed for much of cuneiform's history).¹⁸ The tablets are indeed reminiscent of scholastic exercises like the second column of Origen's *Hexapla*, but there is a crucial difference: knowledge of cuneiform had drastically shrunk and ultimately was lost entirely with the cataclysms of the third century CE, when the Babylonian temples were destroyed, whereas Origen's purpose was to allow the proper study of a text and language in a flourishing and continuously developing literary tradition. Thus the Greco-Babyloniaca tablets can be understood as last-ditch attempts by Babylonian temple scribes to preserve and transmit the arcane and dying art of cuneiform writing. The reason why Greek and not Aramaic was chosen as the script for transcription was correctly explained by Geller: 'Greek was the most suitable medium for transliteration, since it preserved both vowel and consonant sounds fairly satisfactorily, in contrast to Aramaic which lacked most vowels in its orthography'.¹⁹

A ritual linguistic need by a marginal religious community is also the best way to understand the enigmatic Papyrus Amherst 63, a second-century BCE collection of pagan cultic texts, found near Thebes in Egypt,

¹⁶ Geller 1997; and see now Maul 1991.

¹⁷ Or maybe fewer: see now Krebern timer 2002.

¹⁸ It can safely be assumed that the tablets were not produced for Babylonians trying to learn Greek.

¹⁹ Geller 1997: 48.

written in the Aramaic language transcribed into demotic script.²⁰ It now appears that the papyrus contains the New Year's liturgy of a community of exiles from Mesopotamia who had lost their fluency in Aramaic, the original language of their ritual, which they nonetheless tried to maintain. The transcribed text is at the edge of scribal knowledge and ability. Linguistic analysis has revealed that the scribe did not understand what he was writing, nor was he transliterating an existing Aramaic text, but was recording in the local dominant script an oral liturgy, so that those participating in the ritual could pronounce the words correctly. The text, incorporating a pagan adaptation of an ultimately Jewish prayer based on Psalm 20, was already formulated before the exiles imported it into Egypt. As Nims and Steiner wrote, the transliteration of the text into demotic script must have been motivated in large part by 'the precarious situation of Aramaic in Egypt at the time'. And they continue:

Bearing in mind that our document is about a century and a half later than the latest Egyptian Aramaic documents in Aramaic script... we may hypothesize that it was written for a priest whose Aramaic was so poor that he was able neither to memorize the liturgy nor to read it in Aramaic script. Like many American Jews today, he needed a phonetic transliteration into a familiar script. Thus, it hardly matters that our text may have been partially unintelligible even to native speakers of Aramaic with a good knowledge of demotic script. It was never meant to be intelligible. It was meant to enable an Egyptian Aramean to continue the tradition of reciting prayers in Aramaic despite his ignorance of that language.²¹

Thus, much like the Greco-Babyloniaca tablets, this papyrus represents an attempt to preserve and perpetuate the linguistic fine points of a fading religious ritual, but the differences are plain: unlike Akkadian and Sumerian, Aramaic was by no means a dying language, but knowledge of it was indeed fading or near extinct within the marginal community of exiles in Egypt who had lost the ability to read and understand the original language of their liturgy in its cognate script – and they so cherished their native ritual that they opted for transcription instead of translation.

An instructive case of a dying language transcribed into the dominant script, slightly different from that of Greco-Babyloniaca, is represented by the 'Latino-Punic' inscriptions, i.e. neo-Punic written in Latin letters,²²

²⁰ See the publication of a central part of the text by Nims and Steiner 1983; and originally Bowman 1944; subsequent bibliography has been sizable, as other parts of the text have been deciphered and interpreted, cf. *inter alia* Steiner 1984; Steiner 1991: 362–3; Steiner 1995: 199–207.

²¹ Nims and Steiner 1983: 272.

²² There are also a few cases of Greco-Punic.

from the interior of Tripolitania and dating, probably, from the third and fourth centuries CE.²³ The linguistic and interpretive problems of these texts aside, it can be said with certainty that they testify to the loss of literacy in Punic while the language itself continued to be spoken. Persistent linguistic, cultural and epigraphic habits led the inscribers to continue to use their own spoken language, of whose cognate script they were however ignorant. In other words, speakers (themselves certainly bilingual) of a slowly waning but still vital minority language perforce wrote that language in the dominant script, which was the only one they knew.²⁴ The neo-Punic of the inscriptions quite naturally shows signs of heavy infiltration by Latin words and formulae, i.e. the language of the script being used; strong epigraphic habits were imported with the script.

Other languages met the same fate as Punic in the western part of the Roman Empire, where local languages with their own scripts underwent transitional phases in which loss of knowledge of the script preceded death of the language itself, and surviving speakers perforce inscribed their language in the Latin alphabet. Such is the case with the last inscriptions in the Etruscan and Gaulish languages, for example, and Oscan inscriptions in Greek letters.²⁵ As Adams remarked, 'The old languages came for a period to be written in Latin script, before dying out.'²⁶ In these cases the separation of a language from its cognate script marks the threshold of extinction: one might even see in these inscriptions an ultimately failed attempt to perpetuate the traditional languages in the face of Romanisation. But in no instance did the practice of transcription become entrenched, for in each case it was a temporary measure answering a transitory phenomenon, and ultimately failed to save the spoken languages. Even less durable than the western scripts were the local scripts of Asia Minor, all of which, except Phrygian, gave way almost immediately to the ubiquitous Greek alphabet after Alexander's conquests in the fourth century BCE. The corpus of surviving inscriptions in the main transcribed languages – Lydian, Carian, Lycian, Pisidian – is not very

²³ Adams *Bilingualism*: 230–5, for sources and a rather full bibliography; see also Millar 2004: esp. 261–2.

²⁴ The transcribed Punic sections in Plautus' *Poenulus* (930ff.), just like the Persian bit in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (100), were composed for comic effect, when those two languages were very much alive. The characters in the plays do not understand the languages, and Aristophanes' and Plautus' respective audiences were not expected to, either. Obviously those bits were transcribed for the benefit of actors who had to learn them phonetically, and for readers who could not read the foreign script. Their purpose was comically to emphasise the foreignness of the speakers.

²⁵ On the fascinating process of linguistic transition in northern Italy and Gaul, see Häussler 2002, and in the same volume, Cooley 2002. For an overview, Polomé 1983.

²⁶ Adams *Bilingualism*: 176 and 66.

large; the languages themselves died out quickly, at the latest by the first century.²⁷ Phrygian proved to be more tenacious, for there is evidence that it was spoken in some form until the sixth century CE, but the last inscriptions in Phrygian script are from the third century BCE. Phrygian phrases and sentences appear in Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor up to the third century CE: the transcribers of Phrygian in Greek letters used the dominant script of the region, probably the only one they knew, certainly the only one which could be fluently read by their intended audience.

LINGUISTIC SEAMS

Dying languages, even if once dominant, had become minority languages under a powerful empire and were perforce transcribed into the dominant script(s) of the empire. There are, however, rarer instances of the opposite phenomenon – i.e. transliteration from a dominant language to a minority script – especially among the Jews of antiquity. For example, a Jewish epitaph from Venosa, dated to the fifth century CE, reads as follows:²⁸

שלום על מי
שכהבו
טפוס
סהקונדינו
פרסוביטרו
קימיטי אן ירינא
אטון אוגדואנטא

Menorah in the middle of lines 3–7

The first two lines of this inscription are a common Hebrew formula (with one orthographic oddity to be discussed below), whereas the rest of the inscription is a Greek text written in Aramaic letters. The Greek in lines 3–7 should be understood as follows:

τάφος Σεκυνδίνου πρεσβυτέρου. (ἐ)κοιμήθη (or, if the *tet* is in fact a *samekh*:
κοίμησι[ς]) ἐν εἰρήνῃ.²⁹ ἐτῶν ὀγδοῇκτα.³⁰

²⁷ For an overview see Schmitt 1983: 565–70.

²⁸ Noy 1993: 98–100, no. 75; the reading is taken from Noy, rejecting other mistaken readings and parsings of lines 4–7. Avigad 1976: 230 mentions a Greek inscription in Hebrew letters, but we have not been able to examine this text.

²⁹ This is based on Colafemmina's reading of the letters; see app.crit. and bibliography in Noy. Following Lenormant, Frey in *CII* printed in line 4: קי מטירינא = καὶ Ματηρίνα(ς), and this reading influenced others as well, but it appears incorrect.

³⁰ Instead of ὀγδοῇκτα, the classical form.

The inscription consists entirely of formulae, but what is interesting is that the inscriber did not revert to Greek letters when he started a new, Greek formula in line 3, thus setting this inscription off from the relatively numerous bilingual Jewish inscriptions which use the same Greek and Jewish formulae rendered in their appropriate scripts. It seems that the author³¹ was more accustomed to speaking and writing Greek than Hebrew, since, although the inscription is not a perfect transliteration from Greek, there are nonetheless superfluous letters which can be best explained as arising from the need felt by the inscriber to insert vowels: the highly irregular *yod* and *he* in what should simply be מִשְׁכָּבוֹ, the *he* in the name Secundinus, and even the superfluous *vav* (or a *yod*, judging from the photo) in the word פֶּרְסְבוֹטֶרִי. These spellings, and similar examples like שְׁאֵלוֹם and עֵים in other Jewish epitaphs from Italy,³² are apparently the reflection of literacy in a vowelised language. What is noteworthy here, however, is not bilingualism or biliteracy, but the fact that the inscriber chose to write the *language* in which he apparently was more comfortable, the dominant language, in the *script* of a minority language with which he was ethnically identified but whose conventions he apparently knew far less well. Unlike the examples discussed so far, the minority language and script were alive and well – at least on a literary plane. Here the inscriber is not witness to the death of a script or language, rather he struggles to make a statement of personal identity; his audience is necessarily Jewish. This means that, unlike every case presented so far, the transcription did not help break down the barrier between a circumscribed group and the open, general culture, or to preserve a minority culture by means of the conventions of the dominant one, but rather *reinforced* cultural barriers in the form of script, if not language. The text, however, while freely composed, is relatively short, consists entirely of formulae, and as such could perhaps be considered as merely a more extensive example of single words and brief formulaic expressions with which Jews in the Diaspora so frequently salted their epitaphs. It is certainly not an example of bilingualism combined with monoliteracy, because the orthographic oddities indicate that the author in fact not only knew how to write Greek in its proper alphabet, but felt more comfortable with it.

This inscription is reminiscent of the so-called Cologne Ketubah, a Jewish marriage contract from Antinoopolis dated to 417 CE, written in

³¹ Or authors? A different hand *may* have inscribed the last two lines, although the available photograph is not good enough for close inspection.

³² Noy 1993: nos. 47, 49, 55, 64, 134; Noy 1995: 193; compare Chwolson 1882: no. 36.

Aramaic but including fairly extensive portions of transcribed Greek.³³ The transcribed parts contain nothing more than formulaic information essential to the legal document, rendered in Greek for purposes of precision and civic custom, namely dating formulae and place names (lines 1–3, 5: the Hebrew date is given in line 4), and the valuation of the several items in the dowry using Greek standards (lines 14–18). Obviously the scribe of this *ketubah* found it easier or more precise to *transcribe*, instead of *translating* into Aramaic, all the information which he received in Greek. The document is unique for its period: how unusual the transcription practice was in fifth-century Egypt is difficult to know in the absence of comparative material in the large time gap between the second-century marriage documents from the Judaean Desert and the relatively plentiful examples from the ninth century and later (a period when Jews began transcribing many languages into their own script). We shall only observe that the uniqueness of the *ketubah* supports our main thesis that extensive transcription was not a mainstream cultural practice in Greco-Roman antiquity.

Occasionally a transcribed text constitutes the remains of what can only be called a scholastic exercise, but different in nature and audience from Origen's transcribed Hebrew Bible, which was prepared for a small, specialised readership. A unique Greek 'educational papyrus' in Armenian script, rediscovered recently in the National Library in Paris, represents, according to its editor, James Clackson, 'an aberrant use of Greek educational material, probably for the acquisition of the language by an adult Armenian. It is possible that the writer took down information by ear from an informant who himself was only dimly able to remember his own educational experience.'³⁴ This papyrus, although linguistically unique, is not without parallel, for there are also a few other 'educational papyri' from Egypt which record Latin material in Greek or Coptic script,³⁵ and an obverse of the same phenomenon can be seen in Greek glosses on Coptic texts.³⁶ The same thing is apparently represented in a puzzling and dimly understood fragment of the Septuagint with an Arabic gloss in Greek letters above each Greek word.³⁷

These scholastic exercises originated in schools, workshops or private houses. Yet a remarkable example of a text produced in the same spirit and for an apparently similar purpose was found on the wall of a cave in Naḥal Dimonah (Wadi Jaraba). In fact there are two inscriptions written

³³ Main edition: Sirat, Cauderlier, Dukan and Friedman 1986.

³⁴ Clackson 2000. ³⁵ E.g. Schubart 1913.

³⁶ Personal communication, Dr Joachim Quack. ³⁷ Kahle 1904: 32–3.

by one person. The first is a two-line Aramaic text transcribed in Greek letters, which has been subjected to various interpretations of what the actual words are, as well as their meaning, since its first publication by Kirk in 1938.³⁸ Based on the parsing suggested by Peters, the inscription should be read as follows:

σιμαθα καιαμα λαμαν
δαελαα σαβη ου ιαεβ λακ

This represents the Aramaic:

סימא קימא למן דאלהא צבא הו יהב לך
sim^ata kayyama l^aman d^aelaha ṣaḇe hu yaheb lak

The treasure is available, God will give it to whomever He wishes.

The only problem with this interpretation is that the last word should be הַל (λα) and not הַל (לאκ), and we must assume a mistake in writing or simply inattentiveness on the part of the writer.

The nature and purpose of this inscription become clear when we consider it together with the inscription written above it:

Μνησθῆ Ζοραιθα
κλτλχντπρθλσ
aaaaaaaaaaaa

The first line means: May Zoraitha be remembered (for the good: εἰς ἀγαθόν = דכיר לטב). The next two lines, as Kirk realised in his original publication, are a clever writing exercise: the first line is a series of consonants, after each one of which is to be inserted an alpha, all of which appear on the next line, rendering the sentence: καλὰ τὰ λαχάνα τὰ παραθάλασσα. Zoraitha was probably a nun whose native spoken language was Aramaic; she produced a writing exercise – a whole sentence in which the same vowel follows each consonant – playing with a leading feature of Semitic scripts, i.e. their lack of vowels. It is reasonable to assume that the other inscription, Aramaic in Greek letters, was also a kind of writing exercise (was she perhaps learning how to write in Greek?). In other words, while this text, like the others discussed above, does represent the concept of the separability of a spoken language and its cognate script, we have here an individual, peculiar phenomenon.

A miscellany of other texts – all brief documents – further demonstrate both the widespread if sporadic occurrence of transcription, and also

³⁸ Kirk 1938: 239.

its utter peripherality: a demotic graffito in Greek script from Egypt,³⁹ an Aramaic graffito (dedication) in Greek letters in the temple of the Palmyrene gods at Dura-Europos,⁴⁰ an Aramaic exclamation transcribed in Greek in a mosaic at Madaba,⁴¹ a brief Greek inscription in Samaritan letters from the floor of a synagogue at Beth Shean,⁴² a Phoenician graffito in Greek script⁴³ – this is not a complete list, and there is no need to discuss them all in detail here. No doubt other such texts will surface in the future, but it seems highly unlikely that they will demonstrate anything more than the examples above have shown: that separation of a language and its text was a phenomenon signifying marginality or liminality of some kind.

GRECO-LATIN

Finally, the phenomenon of Latin written in Greek letters and (less frequently) Greek written in Latin letters,⁴⁴ a curious practice found mostly in Italy, presents a more complex problem of interpretation, both because of the large number and variety of these texts and also, puzzlingly, because the transcriptions involve two dominant languages and their cognate scripts. This is the only instance we know from antiquity (aside from certain magical texts) of a dominant language being transcribed into a dominant script.

The material is all documentary – mostly funerary inscriptions and a few papyri.⁴⁵ There exist no continuous, freely composed, transcribed literary texts in Greco-Latin (or Latino-Greek).⁴⁶ Thus interpretation of the texts must take into account their close association with find spot, the cultural and social background of the authors, their special purpose (especially in the non-funerary instances), and intended audiences. The epitaphs, as is to be expected, consist almost entirely of formulae. The following inscription (*CIL* VI 15450) is typical of the linguistic and formulaic patterns of dozens of other Greco-Latin epitaphs:

³⁹ Pestman *Recueil*: no. II. ⁴⁰ Milik 1967; Hillers and Cussini *Palmyrene*: no. III7.

⁴¹ Piccirillo 1981: 311 (= *IGLS* XXI 2.137). ⁴² Naveh 1978: 76, n. 2.

⁴³ Adams *Bilingualism*: 240. ⁴⁴ For convenience, we will refer to both here as Greco-Latin texts.

⁴⁵ The texts have not been collected in one place. There is much material in Donderer 1995; useful discussion by Kajanto 1963; Kajanto 1980: 96–7; Leiwo 1995. And see now the detailed analysis by Adams *Bilingualism*: 40–63. We would like to thank Nurit Karshon for helping to assemble the material consulted for this section.

⁴⁶ Julius Caesar encoded a Latin letter in Greek script lest it be intercepted and read by the Nervii, who could not read Greek (*BG* 5.48); earlier he had mentioned documents written in Greek (*tabulae*... *litteris Graecis confectae*) found in the camp of the Helvetii, by which he means Greek language and script (*BG* 1.29).

Αλλονια
 Μαρκ(ε)λα φη-
 κητ μαριτο σου-
 ο βενε μερετι Α-
 λονιο Ζωτικο.
 ανωσ βιξιτ μικ-
 ου Ξ Ι Ι.

[*Allonia Marc(e)la fecit marito suo bene mere(n)ti Alonio Zotico. An(n)os (v)ixit m(e)cu(m) XXII.*]

Names and age were added as if to a template. The epigraphic habits of the language of composition (Latin) and not the cognate language of the alphabet (Greek) were adopted, with generally little room granted to originality or personal expression,⁴⁷ a phenomenon which in itself suggests the uncertainty or lack of confidence of the authors in the language of composition or the Latin conventions of the epigraphic medium.

The linguistic and graphemic features of the Greco-Latin texts, which have so occupied scholars, cannot be dealt with here, but this would not be necessary in order to demonstrate the cultural or social marginality of the authors and/or intended audiences of all the Greco-Latin texts, without exception. It is difficult to accept the interpretation that they represent ‘imperfect bilingualism’, since there is a fundamental difference between fluency in speaking and literacy.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Donderer’s interpretation of the general purpose of these inscriptions as striving for a *Bildungsideal* may be true in some cases but certainly not all, for they are not a unitary phenomenon, but represent rather a wide variety of people – pagans, Christians, Jews – of varying linguistic and writing abilities (a very few were fully bilingual and biliterate, more were bilingual and monoliterate, many were barely literate in any script). The documents – epitaphs, contracts and letters – were written by people in different circumstances for different audiences, and sometimes the purpose of writing in a different script seems to reflect not the author’s needs but those of the addressee

⁴⁷ The various exceptions do not disrupt this overall pattern. Sometimes languages are mixed within the one script, as in *IGR* XIV 626; *CIL* XIV 603, 656; *IGRRP* 185. Script is sometimes switched in a single word, as in *IGRRP* 234, showing perhaps uncertain grasp of literacy in either language. Compare *CIL* VI 27285–6, in which Latin words are written in Latin script and Greek names in Greek letters; and similarly, the substitution of ΘΚ for DM in *IGRRP* 342, which continues in Latin written in Greek characters; similarly the Jewish inscription *IJudOrI* Pan2, a Latin inscription in Greek script, with the common formula εἰς θεῶς at the end.

⁴⁸ See references to this opinion cited by Adams *Bilingualism*: 40–1, and his apt refutation: ‘[“imperfect bilingualism”] is to confuse language learning with the learning of literacy in a language. In fact a fluent bilingual may be either illiterate in both scripts or literate in only one.’

of a letter, the author's contractual partner or the expected reader of an epitaph. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that the alphabet a person learned, as a child or later in life, is the cognate script of the language which he used every day or spoke more fluently, or which the conventions of the monument or document demanded: no *Ideal* need be assumed as a general explanation when practical exigencies suffice – the purpose and circumstances of these texts, which were not written as a group or literary corpus, were obviously different in different cases.

The Greco-Latin texts almost all come from Rome and Italy,⁴⁹ and the people of the epitaphs, both dedicators and dedicatees, are more often than not demonstrably members of the lower orders in Roman society. This is without doubt true for almost all the Jewish specimens and most of the Christian ones, which were produced at a time when both Jews and Christians by necessity maintained a low profile in Rome and Italy (in contrast to eastern cities, where they could attain social prominence, in the same period).⁵⁰ Moreover, every inscription set up in a Jewish or Christian catacomb perforce addressed only the specific and limited sub-society which used and visited the catacombs. The many Jewish examples, as documents of an ethnically delimited group, may indeed show Italian Jews transitioning into spoken Latin. It has long been observed that inscriptions from the Jewish catacombs of Rome reveal the relatively late acquisition of Latin.⁵¹ As for the authors of the other texts, there are almost no *tria nomina*, and an overwhelming preponderance of Greek or foreign names; some explicitly state their status as freedmen,⁵² and one suspects that among the many Claudii are freedmen or descendants of freedman. Thus it is not acceptable, in contrast to one opinion, to view any Greco-Latin inscription as demonstrating any sort of cultural elevation or attempt to reach the widest possible audience, for both of which purposes proper bilingual inscriptions would be required.⁵³ Rather, they represent people living on a cultural and linguistic seam, bilinguals who (in the case of Latin inscriptions in Greek) had received their

⁴⁹ Even the papyrus *CPL* 193, discussed at length by Adams *Bilingualism*: 53, was found in Egypt but written in Ravenna.

⁵⁰ Jewish: Noy 1993: nos. 59, 60, 61, 62, 149; Noy 1995: nos. 5, 67, 114, 195, 220, 250, 261, 264, 273, 275, 287, 289, 323, 332, 335, 349, 368; *JudOr* I, Pani, 2 and Dalz. Christian (strictly *exempli gratia*): *IGCVO* 509, 676, 870, 840; *ILCV* 853, 1352, 2711, 4152B, 4246, 4466, 4500 (over fifty are listed in index).

⁵¹ See Leon 1960; Rutgers 1995: 176–91. This is further strengthened by the Hebrew inscriptions written from left to right (e.g. Noy 1993: no. 173; *CII* 1389).

⁵² E.g., *CIL* VI 8247, *AE* 1985: 157; *IGUR* 818, 980, 1671.

⁵³ See Donderer 1995: 103. He points out that script-switching does not widen but *narrows* the possible readers of the texts.

education in Greek, but because of their surroundings, career, marriage connections, etc., had perhaps come to feel more comfortable speaking Latin, or chose to inscribe their epitaphs in Latin in direct but imperfect imitation of Roman custom.⁵⁴ There are other possible explanations, particularly when we take into account the fact that the author and dedicatee of any given epitaph may have had different abilities in spoken and written languages, and the final product may reflect their different desires or prescriptions.⁵⁵ In any case, none of the parties involved in the Greco-Latin epitaphs need be thought of as recent immigrants to Italy, or even as children of immigrants, since Greek held fast in some enclaves for generations (the Jews are an extreme example).

One inscription stands out from the group as illustrating high competence in both languages and scripts, i.e. a deliberate script-switching by a completely bilingual and biliterate person. This text is *IGUR* 616 (*CIL* VI 20294):

ΔΙΣ ΜΑΝ(ΙΒΟΥΣ).
Γ. ΙΟΥΛΟΥΣ ΤΙΛΕΣΦΟΡΟΣ
ΦΗΚΕΤ ΕΤ ΣΙΒΙ ΕΤ ΣΟΥ-
ΕΙΣ ΛΕΙΒΕΡΤΕΙΣ ΛΕΙΒΕΡΤΑΒΟ-
ΥΣΚΕ ΕΩΡΟΥΜ. ΤΕΡΕΝΤΙΑ ΑΚΤΗ
ΦΗΚΕΤ ΤΕΡΕΝΤΙΩ ΑΝΕΙΚΗΤΩ ΕΤ ΛΕΙ-
ΒΕΡΤΩ ΕΤ ΚΟΝΙΟΥΓΕΙ ΒΕΝΕΜΕΡΕΝΤΕΙ ΕΤ ΣΙ-
ΒΙ ΕΤ ΣΟΥΕΙΣ ΛΕΙΒΕΡΤΕΙΣ ΛΕΙΒΕΡΤΑΒΟΥΣΚ-
Ε ΕΩΡΟΥΜ. ΟΚ ΜΟΝΟΜΕΝΤΟΥ ΗΔΕΦΙΚΑΤΟΥ
ΕΣ ΚΟΜΟΥΝΕ ΑΒ ΙΟΥΝΙΩ ΤΕΛΕΣΦΟΡΩ ΕΤ
ΤΕΡΕΝΤΙΑ ΑΚΤΗ

[*Dis Man(ibus). G. Iul(i)us T(e)lesphorus fecit et sibi et suis libertis libertabusque eorum. Terentia Acte fecit Terentio Aniceto et liberto et coniugi benemerenti et sibi et suis libertis libertabusque eorum. Hoc monumentu(m) (a)edificatu(m) est commune ab Iunio Telesphoro et Terentia Acte.*]

Adams' linguistic analysis of this monument concludes that the author or stonecutter was 'a Latin speaker familiar with certain artificial aspects of Latin orthography . . . He was almost certainly bilingual, and able to use both scripts. That he used the wrong script shows that he had received

⁵⁴ Note the suggestion of Purnelle (see *ad SEG* XLIII 1244) that the *ordinatores*, i.e. the ones who took the dictation of the text and oversaw its execution by the mason, 'either . . . preferred graphic uniformity or they unconsciously wrote a bilingual draft entirely in Latin letters when it was orally dictated to them. In other cases, where the ordinator played no role . . . the writers are supposed to have known better Latin than Greek.'

⁵⁵ Adams *Bilingualism*: 89–93.

a special commission.⁵⁶ That is to say, the intended audience could not read Latin well, and in order to make themselves understood, the authors wrote the dominant language in the script most familiar to their readers, i.e. a bilingual (Greek–Latin) and predominantly monoliteral (Greek) community. It will be noticed that the authors of this shared inscription are both of Greek origin. Both could have been freed slaves, given their *nomina* (Iulius or Iunius, and Terentia), and they each show special concern for their own freedmen and freedwomen; in fact Terentia was married to one of her freed slaves. The connection between Telesphoros and Akte is unclear, but it may have been something more than the need to share the cost of an expensive monument.

All told, then, we think that the Greco-Latin texts confirm our main thesis that transcription of one language into the cognate script of another was an activity on the margins of ancient culture and society. The documentary evidence for the interchange of scripts in these two dominant languages does not point to widespread or continuous activity, certainly not at the level of composition of genuine literary texts. It was a transitory phenomenon reflecting a linguistic transition which would have been completed within a generation. Presumably the authors of the Greco-Latin texts would have written Latin in Latin letters if they could do so, or could expect their intended audience to understand it.

Writing one language in the alphabet of another requires the basic realisation that script and language are separable. This rather simple concept, obviously realised by the authors of the ancient transcriptions discussed above, required a special circumstance to be brought to the fore. In people's minds a language was closely associated with its script, in fact 'letters' normatively referred to language. Texts were transcribed only for exceptional reasons, and transcription never became a mainstream cultural practice. In the Middle Ages and afterwards, transcription of one language into another script spread over a large geographical and cultural range: e.g. Karshuni, the transcription of Arabic in Syriac letters, or medieval Spanish written in Arabic, or the Karaite transcriptions of Hebrew into Arabic script, or Turkish in the Armenian alphabet, or the various languages which the Jews wrote in their Hebrew alphabet (Judæo-Greek, Judæo-Arabic, Yiddish, Ladino). This medieval phenomenon has no true forerunner in antiquity, but the theoretical possibility of such a practice

⁵⁶ Adams *Bilingualism*: 52–3.

is raised in rabbinic discussions of the language and script allowed for writing the Bible. We now turn our attention to this topic.

APPROACHES TO TRANSCRIPTIONS OF THE BIBLE
IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

The rabbis had only one formal body of literature in written form – the Hebrew Bible.⁵⁷ Its sanctity gave rise to many discussions in Talmudic literature about the form, language and script in which it should be written.

The Jewish documents from the Second Temple period make it evident that sometime in the third century BCE the Jews of Palestine began to change their writing practices. While in the Persian period they wrote each language in its own script, so that Hebrew documents were written in Hebrew script and Aramaic in Aramaic, in the early Hellenistic period the Jews began to use the Aramaic script for writing both languages.⁵⁸ Within a relatively short period of time the Aramaic script took over all areas of Jewish writing, penetrating even its *sanctum sanctorum*, the writing of the Bible. Most of the books of the Bible found at Qumran are written in Aramaic script, with only a small minority written in palaeo-Hebrew. Rabbinic law (*halakha*) is even more extreme in its prescription that the Bible must be written only in Aramaic letters (see below). This development created a rather complex situation regarding language and script among the Jews of Palestine: one language (Hebrew) may be written in two different scripts, and one script (Aramaic) is used for writing two separate languages. This appears at first sight to be an instance of transcription – the Hebrew language is written in a foreign script. But as Naveh has shown, this complexity is entirely confined within the limits of *Jewish* linguistic and writing practices. That is, by the time the Jews adopted the Aramaic script for writing Hebrew, Aramaic was no longer the unified imperial script but had broken up into different ethnic scripts.⁵⁹ Thus when the Jews started using Aramaic script for writing Hebrew it was already exclusively Jewish in itself, just like palaeo-Hebrew which had been abandoned. The change in script, therefore, reflects an internal process of unifying Jewish writing practices, and not any willingness on the part of the Jews to write their languages – and a fortiori their holy scriptures – in dominant foreign scripts.

⁵⁷ See the monumental article by Sussman 2005.

⁵⁸ Naveh 1997: 112–24; Tov 2001: 217–20.

⁵⁹ Naveh 1997: 121–2.

Earlier generations of scholars entertained a hypothesis suggesting that the Bible was written in Greek transcription of the Hebrew text; they conjectured that such a transcription was utilised for the two great Greek translations of the Bible – the Septuagint and Origen's *Hexapla*. Tychsen was the first to argue this theory fully,⁶⁰ claiming that the famous tradition about the seventy sages who 'wrote' the Bible for King Ptolemy II – in the Letter of Aristeas, in Josephus (*AJ* 12.11ff.) and in rabbinic literature – refers not to the translation but to the transcription of Scripture. He sought thereby to explain certain peculiar deviations in the Greek translation from the Hebrew original. This hypothesis attracted serious notice only in the 1920s,⁶¹ but was rejected by most scholars after it was shown that most of the problematic passages can be satisfactorily explained without the assumption of an intermediate stage of Greek transcription.⁶²

Tychsen also maintained that such transcribed books existed among the Jews for a few centuries; he adduced proofs from the Talmud that the rabbis knew of biblical books in Greek transcription, claiming that such books were used by Origen for his *secunda*. This supposition of Greek transcriptions known to the rabbis enjoyed a better fate, and was accepted even by scholars who had rejected the hypothesis regarding an early Greek transcription of the Bible preceding its translation.⁶³ A key piece of the rabbinic evidence is *mMegilla* 1:8:

הספרים נכתבין בכל לשון ותפילין ומזוזות אינן נכתבין אלא אשורית.

Torah scrolls may be written in every language, whereas *tefillin* and *mezuzoth* may be written only in *ashurith* (Assyrian).

Interpreting *ashurith* as Assyrian *letters* (= Aramaic script), they understood this Mishna as referring to the script of the holy books and not to their language, in other words, it deals with the transcription of the Bible and not with its translation.⁶⁴ As we will see below, however, in tannaitic texts *ashurith* indicates the Hebrew language, and there is no

⁶⁰ Tychsen 1772: 48–134 and *passim*. His hypothesis was in its essence anticipated already by Rabbi Menahem Ha-Meiri, see below, n. 64.

⁶¹ Wutz 1923, and afterwards in a series of studies.

⁶² A partial list of the critiques of Wutz is compiled by Seeligmann 1990: 371–2, n. 84.

⁶³ See Blau 1894: 80–5; Halévy 1901; Ginsburger 1929: 40–2, 184–6; Orlinsky 1936: 140; Seeligmann 1990: 372, n. 85.

⁶⁴ This interpretation was already suggested by some medieval commentators, most explicitly by Rabbi Menahem Ha-Meiri (Menahem ben Solomon Meiri *Kiryat Sefer* 1.4: 33. See also Maimonides' Code, *Tefilin*, 1:19, and Ginsburger 1929: 184.). Note Meiri's wording: 'the Torah was already copied in Greek *script* by the order of King Ptolemy'; this is apparently the earliest expression of the idea that the seventy elders did not *translate* the Torah but *transcribed* it into Greek.

reason not to read the Mishna literally as referring to the writing of the Torah in different languages. This was already argued by Blau,⁶⁵ but even he maintained the notion, based on a different Talmudic passage cited by Tychsen,⁶⁶ that the rabbis had in their possession biblical books transcribed in foreign script.⁶⁷ Inspection of this passage, however, reveals that this source as well deals with translation and not transcription. A *baraita* in the Babylonian Talmud teaches:

היו כתובין גיפסית, מדיית, עיברית, עילמית, יוונית, אף על פי שלא ניתנו לקרות בהן – מצילין אותן מפני הדליקה.

If they, [the holy books] were written in Coptic, Median, Hebrew, Elamite, Greek – even if it is not allowed to read from them – they are to be saved from the fire.⁶⁸

If this passage, Blau claimed, deals with the languages of the books, it is impossible to understand why Hebrew is included among the foreign languages, and why a book written in Hebrew should be disqualified; but if the *baraita* refers only to different scripts, ‘Hebrew’ may be explained as the palaeo-Hebrew script, which the rabbis had forbidden as a script suitable for writing the Bible (see below). This reading, however, encounters a serious obstacle. The same list of languages appears in another passage in the tractate *Megilla* dealing with the ritual reading of the Scroll of Esther,⁶⁹ and here it is impossible to explain it as referring to script and not to language itself:

קראה גיפסית, עברית, עילמית, מדיית, יוונית – לא יצא. גיפסית לגיפטים, עברית לעברים, עילמית לעילמים, יוונית ליוונים – יצא.

If one read [the Scroll of Esther] in Coptic, Hebrew, Elamite, Median or Greek, he has not fulfilled his obligation.

[But if he read it] in Coptic for Coptic-speakers, Hebrew for Hebrew-speakers, Elamite for Elamite-speakers, or Greek for Greek-speakers – he has fulfilled his obligation.⁷⁰

This *baraita* is quoted to explain the Mishnah, which asserts that the Scroll of Esther must be read in Hebrew, but whoever does not understand Hebrew may hear it in his own language.⁷¹ The *baraita* illustrates this

⁶⁵ Blau 1894: 84–5. ⁶⁶ Tychsen 1772: 62. ⁶⁷ Blau 1894: 81. ⁶⁸ *bShabbat* 115a.

⁶⁹ This passage also had been cited by Tychsen 1772: 152 and by Blau 1894: 82.

⁷⁰ *bMeg.* 18a. The *baraita* is not quoted as one continuous text, but both its parts can be reasonably understood to constitute a single textual unit.

⁷¹ *‘If one read [the Scroll of Esther] in targum (‘If one read [the Scroll of Esther] in targum [= Aramaic], or in any language, he has not fulfilled his obligation; but it is permissible to read it to non-Hebrew speakers in their own language’): mMeg. 2:1.*

principle with the list of the different languages. Here there is no doubt that language and not script is meant, i.e. the *baraita* is referring to the Scroll of Esther *translated* into Coptic, Elamite, etc. The inclusion of Hebrew in the list of languages is now doubly difficult, for aside from the appearance of Hebrew in the list of 'foreign' languages, it seems to contradict the Mishnah's determination that the principal language in which the Scroll should be read is Hebrew.⁷²

The key to understanding the two citations of the identical language list is apparently to be discovered in the astonishing fact that in both instances one important language is missing – Aramaic, the language spoken by the Jews who produced the corpus of rabbinic literature. It would have been only natural to mention Aramaic in the first place, before the other more exotic languages like Coptic and Elamite, in order to stress the point that the Scroll of Esther must be read in the holy tongue and no other. The absence of Aramaic in the list signifies that the list represents the vernacular tongues of the region *from the perspective of Aramaic itself*, i.e. from the perspective of the language shared by the many different ethnic groups in the east.⁷³ This explains why the list includes Hebrew: from the point of view of Aramaic, Hebrew is a localised language like all the others in the region. It thus seems clear that the list of languages did not reflect a Jewish reality, because in such a context it should have been framed from the central perspective of Hebrew. In both its occurrences, the list of languages is cited in discussions of a text containing the phrase 'every language',⁷⁴ and a ready-made list of all languages known in the East is employed for the purposes of illustration and interpretation. The Talmud, however, utilised this ready-made list without the revision required by the new context – i.e. a shift of perspective from Aramaic to Hebrew – resulting in the perplexing passages in question. When read in this way, the Talmud contains no hint whatsoever of the existence of transcriptions of the Bible in foreign scripts, much less the use of such transcriptions by the Jews.

⁷² The immensity of this difficulty led Rashi to explain: 'Hebrew – the language spoken on the other side of the [Euphrates] River' (deriving *ivrit* (= Hebrew) from *ever* (= the other side)). See Tur-Sinai 1954: 130–1; but *pace* Tur-Sinai, in its every occurrence in rabbinic literature 'Hebrew' (*ivrit*) signifies the Hebrew language, and the rabbis never referred to Aramaic as 'Hebrew'. See further Bar-Kochva 1998: 76.

⁷³ It could be that the list derives ultimately from the period in which Aramaic was still the official language of the Persian Empire, or in a related context dealing with that period (e.g. as an explication of the story in the Scroll of Esther about the scrolls disseminated in all the languages of the Empire, Esther 1:12; 3:12).

⁷⁴ *mShabb.* 16:1; *mMeg.* 2:1.

There is in fact no clear reason why such transcribed books should even have been made.⁷⁵ This kind of transcription is used to enable a Hebrew-less reader to pronounce the words correctly, even if he does not understand them, such as in rituals which require public utterance of the Hebrew text.⁷⁶ There is no evidence, however, that the Greek-speaking Jewish communities read the Torah publicly in its original Hebrew, and if somebody did read the Torah in Hebrew there, he certainly knew the language⁷⁷ and could have read the text without the aid of a transcription.⁷⁸ Conversely, several passages in the Talmud indicate that the rabbis were indeed aware of the possibility, most likely theoretical, of transcription in the opposite direction, i.e. of biblical books translated into Greek but written in Jewish script. The aim of this practice was to preserve not the correct utterance of the original text but the original script: thus the reading was understood by the Greek audience while the letters of the text, considered holy, retained their original form.

The rabbis address the question of the relation between script and language in their discussions about the form of the Scriptures and their ritual reading in public. A number of tannaitic sources – found in the Mishnah, the Tosefta and the two Talmuds – entertain the possibility of writing the Scriptures in a language other than Hebrew, and these sources were in turn debated in the Talmud. A key concept which recurs in these debates is ‘Assyrian’ or ‘Assyrian script’, referring to the language and script of the written Bible. As noted above, the term ‘Assyrian script’, or ‘Assyrian letters’, was used by Greek and Demotic authors to signify Aramaic texts, whereby the mention of the alphabet was meant not to distinguish between script and language, but rather to refer to the Aramaic language itself by means of its visual manifestation: language and script were conceived as a whole. Similarly, the rabbis used the term *ashurit* to mean the Hebrew language of the Bible, i.e. they identified the language by the alphabet in which it was written, for their Bible was in fact written in Assyrian = Aramaic letters.⁷⁹ The lack of distinction between script and

⁷⁵ Blau’s belief (see Blau 1894: 83) that such books served as a kind of aid for the Masoretes, to signify vocalisation before the invention of the vocalisation system for Hebrew, is highly improbable.

⁷⁶ A modern example of this can be seen in the practice of printing the Kaddish prayer in transcription in modern-day prayer books, to enable those who cannot read the prayer fluently in Hebrew letters to say Kaddish out loud.

⁷⁷ Cf. *ṭMegilla* 3:13 (ed. Lieberman, p. 356), and the comment by Lieberman 1962: 1179–80.

⁷⁸ Transcription of Hebrew was evidently required in certain non-Jewish circles, namely Christian scholars who wanted to learn how to pronounce Hebrew words in Scripture, which is the purpose of the second column in Origen’s *Hexapla*.

⁷⁹ ‘Because this language was written in Assyrian script it is called by the name of the script, but it is regularly called “the Holy Tongue” and occasionally “the Hebrew Tongue”’ (*Hiddushei ha-Ritba*

language is evident in sources which discuss the possibility of *hearing* the Bible read in *ashurit*, in the reading of the Scroll of Esther⁸⁰ or in the recitation of the Shema.⁸¹ Throughout the tannaitic corpus *ashurit* designates the Hebrew language and not its script alone. This is true as well for the following Mishnah, which sets up parallelisms between *ashurit* and 'any language', on the one hand, and Greek, on the other:

אין בין ספרים לתפילין ומזוזות אלא שהספרים נכתבין בכל לשון ותפילין
ומזוזות אינן נכתבות אלא אשורית. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר אף בספרים
לא התירו שיכתבו אלא יוונית.

There is no difference between books (= Torah scrolls), *tefillin* and *mezuzoth* except that books may be written in any language while *tefillin* and *mezuzoth* may be written only in *ashurit*. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: even in the case of books, they are not permitted to be written (in any other language) except Greek.⁸²

This Mishnah, quite simple in itself, aroused an interesting discussion in the Talmud, since the permission to write the Holy Scripture 'in any language' flatly contradicts another Mishnah that stresses that in order for a scroll containing a biblical book to be considered sacred (i.e. 'it defiles the hands') and permissible for ritual public reading, it must be written 'in *ashurit*, on skin, in ink' (*mYad.* 4:5). There appears to be no way to avoid the conclusion that the contradictory sources reflect fundamental conceptual differences as to the requisite language and script of biblical books. The rabbis, however, customarily invest considerable effort to reconcile contradictory sources, and towards this end some rabbis make a distinction between language and script, allowing some occurrences of *ashurit* to signify not the language, but solely the script. In the Babylonian Talmud, Rava (mid-fourth century) says:

לא קשיא, כאן בגופן שלנו כאן בגופן שלהם

There is no contradiction here: one passage refers to [books written in] our font, the other to [books written in] their (a foreign) font.⁸³

[*R. Yom-Tov ben Avraham Ishbili*], *Megilla* 17a, Stern 1976: 118). According to this distinction, *ashurit* does not signify the Hebrew language in a general sense, but serves rather as a special term for the language of the written Bible in its particular and fixed form.

⁸⁰ *mMegilla* 2:1; *tMegilla* 2:6.

⁸¹ *ySota* 7:1 21b (ed. Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2001, p. 933, lines 10–13).

⁸² *mMeg.* 1:8.

⁸³ *bMeg.* 8b–9a. The word translated here 'font' – GWP(F?)N – is a *hapax legomenon*, and even its correct pronunciation is unclear. Its meaning is, in any case, understood from the context.

In other words, it is permitted to write a Torah scroll 'in every language' so long as it is written 'in our font', i.e. in Assyrian = Aramaic letters, but Torah scrolls written 'in their font' (e.g. in the Greek alphabet) are ritually unfit even if their language is Hebrew. Thus the contradiction is resolved by interpreting the requirement that books of the Bible be written in *ashurit* as referring only to script and not to language, and by the same token the permission to write them 'in every language' is taken to refer only to language and not to script. Rava, then, establishes a general principle of transcription: for the production of books of the Bible there is only one permissible script, *ashurit* = Assyrian letters, which can be used to write not only Hebrew and Aramaic but in fact any language in the world. It is important to recognise the radical conceptual shift inherent in this explanation. The Aramaic script had long before been accepted as a script suitable for writing two languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, but this flexibility was restricted to related *Jewish* scripts and languages and by no means encompassed the notion that this single script could be used for writing the holy books in every language of the world. Did Rava actually know of biblical books translated into foreign languages but written in Aramaic script? This is extremely doubtful: his notion seems *prima facie* to be a purely scholastic strategy intended to harmonise contradictory sources, and it most probably does not reflect actual writing practices. Yet it is important to notice that he could *conceive* of such a book.

A similar idea was mooted even earlier, in the Jerusalem Talmud, by R. Shmuel bar Sosarti, who lived in Palestine one generation before Rava. The passage in question is obscure, and commentators are uncertain about its exact interpretation,⁸⁴ but apparently it is dealing with a problem similar to the one in the Babylonian Talmud, namely: how is it possible to read the Scroll of Esther in a foreign language while maintaining the requirement that it be written in *ashurit*? R. Shmuel's suggestion is as follows: 'It may be solved by assuming that [the Scroll] was written GYGNTWN.'⁸⁵

The word GYGNTWN is a *hapax legomenon*, its pronunciation and meaning unclear.⁸⁶ Yet even without a perfect understanding of it, we can assume that R. Shmuel uses the term to describe an unusual method

⁸⁴ See commentaries in *Talmud Yerushalmi*, Vilnius, 1926, *Meg.* 18b and the commentators referred to in nn. 87–8 below.

⁸⁵ תיפתר שהיתה כתובה גיגנטון – *yMeg.* 2:1, 83a (ed. Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2001, p. 758, lines 33–8).

⁸⁶ The word *sounds* like Greek, but no known single Greek word fitting the transcriptional form makes sense in the context (γίγαντες, 'of giants', suggested by Kohut 1878: 234, *s.v.* גיגנטון, has no meaning in our passage).

of writing which satisfies both requirements: the Scroll is written in *ashurit*, but can nevertheless be read out in a foreign language. This is possible only in a Scroll written in transcription, i.e. Greek transcribed in Assyrian = Aramaic letters.⁸⁷ This explanation helps solve the puzzle of the word GYGNTWN. Among the various interpretations offered,⁸⁸ Siegmund Fraenkel's seems best:⁸⁹ GYGNTWN in itself is a transcription in Aramaic letters of the first words of the Scroll of Esther in Greek – καὶ ἐγένετο [ἐν] – according to the pronunciation of Greek in Palestine in the Talmudic period.⁹⁰ In this manner, it is possible to read a Scroll written in *ashurit* (Aramaic script) for the benefit of someone who understands only Greek.

The way in which R. Shmuel bar Sosarti uses the special term *gegene-toun* reveals that it was familiar to his colleagues and immediately comprehensible. But, again, whether his use of the term can be taken as evidence for the actual existence of Greek Scrolls of Esther written in Aramaic letters is highly doubtful. More likely is the possibility that R. Shmuel relied on his colleagues' recognition of the pronunciation of the Greek words to suggest the innovative possibility of writing these words in Aramaic letters. In any case, both Talmuds attest that the rabbis could at least imagine on a theoretical level the possibility of a whole book transcribed, as a way of fulfilling the requirements which all the various sources place on the public reading of Scripture for the benefit of Jews who do not understand Hebrew.

Despite the absence in the talmudic sources of any solid proof for extended transcriptions of the Bible as anything more than a theoretical possibility, they nonetheless shed important light on the rabbis' *conception* of the script and language of their holy books. For these sources represent

⁸⁷ Cf. Rabinowitz 1940: 309, and in Marim 1890: 109.

⁸⁸ Most of them involving an emendation of the text; see talmudic commentaries and lexica, esp. Löw's note on גיגנטון, in Krauss 1899: 171. Among the emendations should be mentioned that by Brüll, who proposed the reading גיגלנטון = δὶ γλωττων, that is, the public reading in Greek was done from a scroll written in two languages, Hebrew and Greek (Brüll 1878: 116. This solution, accepted by Blau 1894: 90 and Kohut 1878, had in fact already been proposed by R. Moshe Margolioth in *Pnei Moshe* (in *Talmud Yerushalmi*, Vilnius, 1926, *Meg.* 18b), although his understanding of the word גיגנטון is far-fetched). But aside from the radical emendation required by Brüll's suggestion, reading the Greek from such a scroll can by no means be considered as reading *ashurit*.

⁸⁹ Cited by E. Löw (previous note).

⁹⁰ The first *gimmel* stands for κ adjacent to the voiced sound; compare e.g. גזזטרא/כצזטרא (ἐξέστρα) and גלזסא/קלזסא (κόλλεξ). The *yod* after the *gimmel* indicates the contracted pronunciation of the ai as an e, a change which was 'well established' by the mid-second century CE at the latest, according to Sturtevant 1968: 48–50. The last element of the word (גן-) could reflect the contracted pronunciation of the diphthong εο resulting in the elision of the last syllable of ἐγένετο and ἐν, in which case the word should be read גיגנטון.

transcription as a strictly one-way process: the writing of a foreign language in Aramaic script. Such a transcription would have been produced not for any linguistic or practical reason, but for a religious one; Aramaic script, according to these same sources, is the sacred script and therefore the only one in which books of the Bible may be written. This fundamental idea is reflected in many *halakhot*, which prescribe the requisite form of the letters down to the finest detail,⁹¹ as well as in *midrashim* and *aggadot*, which find meaning even in the form of the letters and their ornamentation.⁹² Script is thus conceived as more than just the graphic representation of speech, indeed as nothing less than a vital component of the physical essence of the holy book. The laws regarding script and writing practice are part of the laws prescribing the physical make-up of the book – from the types of parchment and the process of their manufacture, to the type of ink and the method of its preparation, and ultimately to the shape and form of the pages, the graphic configuration of the letters, big and small letters, serifs and crowns, diacriticals, and so forth.

The rabbis who attributed such significance to the Aramaic script held a frankly ideological position,⁹³ and their conception of script as part of the prescribed physical essence of a holy book stands in stark contrast to the Mishnah, quoted above, which permits books of the Bible to be written ‘in every language’. These two approaches clash on the very question of what makes Scripture sacred – its literary substance, which conceivably could be conveyed in any language, or the more concrete characteristics of the books themselves, i.e. their language, script and material. Resolving the contradiction in the sources in the manner suggested above favours the second answer.⁹⁴ It is interesting to note that

⁹¹ E.g. Sifre Deuteronomy 36 (ed. L. Finkelstein, Berlin, 1939, p. 65); *bMen.* 29b.

⁹² E.g. *yHag.* 2:1, 67c (ed. Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2001, p. 785, l.49–786, l.19) = *Gen.R.* 1:10 (ed. J. Theodor, Berlin, 1903, pp. 8–9); *bMen.* 29b; cf. also *bEruv.* 21b; *Lev.R.* 19a (ed. Margulies, 1993, p. 213) and 19b (pp. 222–3).

⁹³ The rabbis’ zealous adherence to the Aramaic script smacks of separatism, and it could be connected to the splitting-up and diffusion of scripts among different religious groups in this period: the Jews write Assyrian = Aramaic script, the Samaritans write palaeo-Hebrew (it is only in this period, from the third century on, that the Samaritan script takes on its distinctive features, see Naveh 1997: 123) and the Gentiles and Christians write in Syrian Aramaic script. A separatist motive is also implied in the tradition which Rav H̥isda related in the name of Mar Ukba that ‘Israel chose for themselves the Assyrian script and . . . left for the *bediotot* [= Samaritans, according to Rav H̥isda] the Hebrew script’ (*bSan.* 21b). Some have suggested that the roots of this separatist conception date back to the sectarian controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees in the days of the Second Temple (see Naveh 1997: 122), but the evidence is too thin to support this notion.

⁹⁴ A similar transition from words’ semantic content to their written appearance is reflected also in rabbinical exegesis, see Naeh 1992.

the original transition of the script designated for the biblical books from palaeo-Hebrew to Aramaic in the third century BCE testifies to a certain insensitivity to the importance of the shape of individual letters;⁹⁵ yet when the rabbis of the Talmuds dealt with the question, they arrived at the opposite extreme, finding utmost importance in the shape and form of the letters themselves. The new interpretation of the Mishnah permitting biblical books to be written in any language as referring only to language and not to script led to an extreme conclusion: the only linguistic requirements for a biblical book to be considered holy are the physical components of language – letters; it is possible to write the Bible in any language and forego the sacred tongue so long as the book itself is written in the sacred letters.

Finally, we should note that the theoretical transcriptional system represented in the Talmud – writing a complete Greek book in Aramaic letters – seems to anticipate the widespread phenomenon in the Middle Ages and later, when the Jews wrote in their own script all the languages they spoke, just like other groups. But in fact there is a substantial difference between these later transcriptional systems and the one described in the Talmud. The medieval practices developed when a certain group had to use its own familiar script to write a new language, whereas the talmudic requirement of writing the Torah in the proper Jewish script compelled Greek-speaking Jews to use the Aramaic script to write their own familiar language, contrary to their own writing habits, in order to preserve the sanctity of the biblical books. Nevertheless, one may assume that the talmudic formulation had some impact on the Jewish writing habits. It could be that the Jews' adherence to their own particular script – an adherence which characterises Jewish writing practice in every language up to the modern period – is not merely the consequence of convenience but in fact stems from ideological roots which can be found in the Talmud.

⁹⁵ The reality was naturally more complex during the transitional period, and there are indications that certain groups continued to attribute importance, and even special sanctity, to the ancient Hebrew script; thus, for instance, certain scrolls from Qumran are written entirely in Aramaic script except for God's name, which is rendered in palaeo-Hebrew letters (see Tov 2001: 220). The use of the palaeo-Hebrew script on coins throughout the Second Temple period and during the two revolts also reveals the special national significance still attributed to this script (Naveh 1997: 119).

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*Edessene Syriac inscriptions in late antique Syria**Sebastian Brock*

The 'Old Syriac' inscriptions of the first three centuries CE (the earliest is dated to 6 CE) are best classified along with the other local Middle Aramaic dialects which made their epigraphic appearance, each with its own distinctive script, around the turn of the Common Era, namely Nabataean (first century BCE to mid-fourth century CE), Palmyrene (mid-first century BCE to late third century CE), and Hatran (mid-first century BCE to early third century CE). The number of known Old Syriac inscriptions is relatively small (c. 100)¹ compared with the other Middle Aramaic dialects (Nabataean, c. 5,500; Palmyrene, c. 2,850; Hatran, c. 450). Since it was the local Aramaic dialect of Edessa (Syriac Orhay, modern (Şanlı) Urfa), it is not surprising that most of the Old Syriac inscriptions come from Edessa or its vicinity, and all belong to Osrhoene (though the two earliest ones, dated 6 CE and 73 CE, are from Birecik, on the Euphrates, and Serrin, in the western part of Osrhoene). An isolated ostrakon has turned up in Germany,² but otherwise there is nothing comparable to the geographic spread of the Nabataean and, above all, the Palmyrene inscriptions, the latter spanning from South Shields (in northern England) to Soqatra.³

The majority of the Old Syriac inscriptions belong to the second half of the second and first half of the third century, and quite a few are dated (see Appendix). They are to be found on stone and in mosaic, and in both categories many are funerary in character. There is a certain amount of variety in the formulation: most commonly the dead person speaks: 'I made this tomb' (As7, 9, 16, 20, 55, 59; AmI-3, 7-10), but an impersonal formula, 'This (is) the tomb (which) N made', also occurs (As56, 58; Am5,

¹ Now conveniently collected by Drijvers and Healey *Old Syriac*. All the Old Syriac inscriptions cited in this article follow Drijvers and Healey's reference numbers: (A)s denotes inscriptions on stone, (A)m those on mosaic.

² Found at Krefeld-Gellep: see Hilgers 2001: 37 (the typically Syriac names Barlaha and Barsamya occur).

³ South Shields: Hillers and Cussini *Palmyrene*: no. 0246; Soqatra: see Robin and Gorea 2002: 409-45, esp. 432-45 (by M. Gorea).

6; cf. AS10), and is the norm if the object is a statue, rather than a tomb. 'Remembered' (*dkyr*) is largely confined to the inscriptions from Sumatar Harabesi, to the east of Edessa (As 26, 30–5, 38), the only occurrences from Edessa being AS3, 20 and AM11. 'Alas' (*hbl*), so common in Palmyrene funerary inscriptions, only occurs in AS6, 14, 21 and 22. Likewise the term for tomb varies between *byt 'lm*, 'house of eternity' (cf. Qohelet 12:5) and *qbr'byt qbwr'/byt qbr*, 'tomb', although the latter never feature in mosaics. A fine new Orpheus mosaic, dated 194 CE and presumably from Edessa, adds a new term, *byt mškn*, 'house/place of abode'.⁴

All the Old Syriac inscriptions appear to be pagan, with no hint yet of a Christian (or Jewish) presence. Particularly intriguing are the mosaics that have turned up on the black market in recent years with scenes from pagan mythology, with the figures identified in Syriac (CM3, 4, 11).⁵ Unlike the situation with Palmyrene inscriptions, where bilingual inscriptions, Palmyrene and Greek, are common, the only Old Syriac inscription where Syriac and Greek feature together is on the mosaic depicting the personified river Euphrates, found at al Mas'udiye (BM1).⁶ This inscription also has a feature which is quite frequently found in Syriac inscriptions of all periods, for the Syriac is at right angles to the Greek. In such inscriptions the Syriac is written downwards, so that the eye has to turn ninety degrees to the left in order to read them. Other Old Syriac inscriptions where this occurs are AS6, 26–29; AM2, 4, 5, 8, 10; sometimes this is in conjunction with horizontal writing (thus in several of the mosaics). The practice continues to be found quite frequently in the fifth- and sixth-century inscriptions.⁷

Inscriptions in the slightly different Late Aramaic form of Syriac (standard, or 'classical') belong to the fourth and subsequent centuries. That Syriac survives as an epigraphic language, whereas Nabataean, Palmyrene and Hatran disappear, is due to the fact that, from at least the second century onwards, the local dialect of Edessa (i.e. Syriac) was chosen by Aramaic-speaking Christianity as its main literary language, producing a very large literature. As in the case of the only other Late

⁴ Becker and Rand 1999: 114–19; illustrated in Brock 2001: 177. The mosaic is now in the Dallas Museum. See now Healey 2006.

⁵ For these see Balty and Briquel-Chatonnet 2000: 31–72.

⁶ Some of the Greek documents of the 240s from Osrhoene are accompanied by signatures in Syriac; for these see the editions by Feissel and Gascou 'Documents I', Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor 'Documents II' and Feissel and Gascou 'Documents III'. For the general background, see now Gnoli 2000 and Ross 2001, with the review by Camplani and Gnoli 2001: 41–68. AS10, from Edessa, mentions a Yohannan *hegemon*, who does not feature in the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*.

⁷ On this matter see Naveh 'Syriac': 102–3, and Voigt 1997: 61–9.

Aramaic dialect beside Syriac to survive epigraphically, namely Jewish Aramaic, the number of inscriptions preserved (or perhaps one should say, so far found) is small compared with the very large number of Greek ones in the same geographical areas. In the case of Syriac, however, it is very noticeable that, whereas Old Syriac inscriptions of the first to third centuries are only found to the east of the Euphrates, those in classical Syriac already begin to appear west of the river in the late fourth century, and by the sixth century they are well established there, especially in the northern parts of Syria. A similar pattern can be observed in the case of Syriac authors: those of the fourth century belong to the east of the Euphrates, but from the fifth century onwards Syriac authors living to the west of the river start to appear. In a way this is surprising, since the advance of Syriac 'visibility' westwards is taking place at exactly the same time that Syriac literature is becoming more and more influenced by Greek. Although bilingual inscriptions using both Syriac and Greek are not at all common⁸ (in contrast to the situation with Palmyrene), there are many localities where separate inscriptions in each language are to be found. This would seem to indicate a high degree of bilingualism among the local population.⁹ This raises some interesting wider questions, to which we shall return briefly at the end of this article.

The Syriac inscriptions of the period from the fourth to the early seventh century vary greatly in character.¹⁰ In contrast to the earlier period, there would seem to be hardly any funerary inscriptions preserved, whereas building inscriptions are now common, above all in the limestone massif west of Aleppo. The great preponderance of the inscriptions is ecclesiastical in character, above all in the case of the longer ones. Numerous personal names are to be found (some of which appear not to be attested elsewhere), for where some monastic construction is concerned the names of the abbot and some, or all, of the monks are listed.¹¹

⁸ Examples include the Zebed trilingual (*JGLS* II 310; of September 511 or 512, depending on whether the Greek or the Syriac new year is being used), Littmann 1934: 4 (of 434), Desreumaux and Gatiér 1993: 173–81, of fourth/fifth century, Salamé-Sarkis 1989: 2.

⁹ On this subject see Brock 1994: 149–60 and Taylor 2002: 298–331.

¹⁰ At present there is no complete inventory of Syriac inscriptions of the fourth to seventh centuries, though bibliographical aids to the various relevant publications are available. See Brock 1978: 255–71, supplemented by Desreumaux 1980: 704–8. These are updated in the section on inscriptions in Brock 1996, supplemented for 1991–5 in Brock 1998, and for 1996–2000 in Brock 2004. For the projected corpus, see Desreumaux and Palmer 1994: 443–7. A corpus of Syriac inscriptions, country by country, is planned, under the auspices of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres; at present the only volume near completion is for Iraq (by A. Harrak). A useful collection of introductory articles is provided in Briquel Chatonnet, Debié and Desreumaux 2004.

¹¹ A good (and beautifully cut) example is Mouterde 1942/3 of 575, and an undated inscription is also published by him (see note 21 below); cf. also Halloun 1988; Salamé-Sarkis 1989: 1; some others are quoted below.

Several commemorative mosaic inscriptions are also to be found, and in two a bishop known from literary sources is mentioned. A five-line mosaic uncovered south-west of Ma'aret Mesrin reads:

*bšnt tmm" w'sryn
wšb' bmnyn' d'pmy' bywmy
mry' psqwp' pṭr'
wmry prydwṭ' wngl'
wqšyš' ywḥnn hww ḥlymyn*

In the year eight hundred and twenty
seven in the numbering of Apamea, in the days of
my lord bishop Peter
and my lord periodeutes Evangelos
and the priest Yohannan: be healthy!

The date corresponds to 515/6, and as Harrak has shown, the bishop must be the well-known anti-Chalcedonian metropolitan Peter of Apamea.¹²

Excavations at Tell Bi'a, near Raqqa, have brought to light the remains of a monastery which can perhaps be identified with that of Mar Zakkai, which had a reputation for its studies of Gregory of Nazianzus. Among the finds are two long and well-preserved inscriptions on mosaic, the earlier dated August 509, and the later April 595.¹³ The former reads:

*b'yrh 'b dšnt
tmm" w'sryn
bqwmh d'bwn qdys'
mry pwl' 'psqwp'
wmry ywlyn' rkydyqwn
dylh wdmrtr' mry
pwl'wqt' ryšdyr'
hw' qwps' hn'
bšqlt' n' dkhñ' dylh
ddyr' mry šm'wn
qšys' wmry zqwṭ'
wmry ḥl' wmry 'wgyn
wmry 'bws mšmšn'
wmry 'brhm mšmšn'
wrbyt' wdclhwn 'ḥ'
qdys' d'lh' nhw'
prw' ṭb' lkwl mn
d'stwtp btwqpsḥ
dbyṭ' hn' wlmrty
šyt' wlmry gnd*

In the month Ab of the year
eight hundred and twenty
during the office of our holy father
my lord Paul the bishop
and my lord Julian the archdeacon
of his, and of the excellent my lord
Polyeuctes the abbot.
This mosaic (work) took place
through the care of the priests of the same
monastery, my lord Simeon
priest, and my lord Zaqota
and my lord Hala and my lord Awgen
and my lord Abbos, deacons
and my lord Abraham, deacon
and steward, and of all the brethren,
holy ones of God. Let there be
a good rewarder to everyone
who participated in the making of the mosaic
of this house, and to my lady
Ashita and to my lord Gennad(ius).

The bishop Paul in question is Paul, bishop of Kallinikos, who was exiled after Justin's accession in 518 due to his opposition to the Council of

¹² Harrak 1995. For Peter, see Honigmann 1951: 57–63. *Mry*, lit. 'my lord', is a standard honorific title for bishops, saints and (less commonly, but see the next inscription) others.

¹³ Krebern timer 1991: no.1.

Chalcedon. Subsequently he translated many of the works of Severus of Antioch.

A hitherto unknown bishop features in a mosaic from Huweija Halwa, on the Euphrates, dated March 471:¹⁴

[b'yrh] 'dr dšnt šb' m' wtmn'yn	[In the month] Adar of the year seven hundred and eighty
wtrtyn bywmy qdys' mr nwn'	and two in the days of the holy Mar Nonnus
pysqwp' wmr srgys ryš	the bishop, and Mar Sargis the ab-
dyr' ddyr' d'wbn' mry	bot of the monastery of the blessed Mar
'lksndr' dwkernhwn	Alexander; may their memory
nhw' lbwrkt' qdm 'lh'	be for a blessing before God,
wdkl mn d'stwtp b'bd'	and (likewise) that of everyone who partici-
	pated in the work
wdhṭy' dršm ktybt' hlyn	and that of the sinner who marked out these
	characters,
ḡmyn	Amen.

The 'monastery of the blessed Alexander' will probably be one dedicated to the memory of Alexander Akoimetes, the 'sleepless' monk from Syria, active around the turn of the fourth/fifth century, who is said to have founded at least two monasteries in Syria.¹⁵

Another Syrian saint almost certainly features in a mosaic dated April 493, but of unknown provenance, though his name was not recognised by its editor who read the inscription somewhat differently:¹⁶

'tsym	there were laid
št'yswhy (Puech qt-)	the foundations
dhby<k>l' (Puech dḡmw[s]l')	of this shrine (Puech 'mausoleum')
hn' bšnt	in the year
tmnm"	eight hundred
wrb'	and four
byrh' nysn	in the month Nisan
bywmy qd<y>š'	in the days of the holy
mry ḡnyn' (Puech ['b]d ḡyl')	Mar Hanina (Puech 'miracle wo[rker]')
[nz]yr' wqs'	Nazirite and priest. ¹⁷

According to the unpublished *Life of Mar Ḥanina* (also given as Ḥnania) by his contemporary, Jacob of Serugh (in British Library Add.

¹⁴ Abu Assaf 1972; see also Donceel-Voûte *Pavements*: 149.

¹⁵ See Vööbus 1960: 194–5; unfortunately the geographical indications in his (Greek) *Life* are very vague.

¹⁶ Puech 1988. To judge by the hand copy Puech gives, the name Hanina seems certain. See now Brock 2006.

¹⁷ qš' for qšys' also occurs in Halloun 1988 (dated September 497); 'nazirite' is a term sometimes used of ascetics.

12174, ff.145a–151b),¹⁸ Ḥanina was renowned for his gift of healing (it is specified that this included women). He lived an ascetic life four miles from the Euphrates, and there he built a baptistery ‘which is standing to this day’ (he is said to have baptised a number of *ṭayyaye barbaraye*, ‘barbarian Arabs’). He died on 18th Adar (March) 811 (= 500 CE). The only other geographical reference is to Qenneshrin (Chalcis), where one of the leading men asks him to go to heal him. The monastery (‘Beth Mar Ḥanina’) is mentioned in a number of Syriac sources, and according to Honigman it was situated between Barbalissos and Kallinikos.¹⁹

This inscription, along with all too many other Syriac inscriptions on mosaic, appeared on the antiquities market, robbed of its archaeological context. The same applies to a building inscription on mosaic which could have been of great archaeological value had it been left in its original find place:²⁰

bšnt tmnm
wʿrbʿyn wšbʿ
bšwbʿʿ w ʿsryn
qḥzwrn (read: *bḥzyrn*) *bywmy mry*
ryšdyrʿ ywḥnn bdwkrnh
dmry ryšdyrʿ yʿqwb
dnšb dyrʿ ʿtsymt
ʿḥ dbytʿ hnʿ
wʿštlm bšnt tmnm

wḥmšyn wḥdʿ bywmy
mry ryšdyrʿ šmʿwn
wgmr(?) wklm ḥṭywtʿ ʿlyʿ

In the year eight hundred
 and forty and seven,
 on the seven and twentieth
 of Haziran, in the days of my lord
 abbot John, on the commemoration
 of my lord abbot Jacob
 who founded the monastery, there was laid
 the ? of this house,
 and it was completed in the year eight
 hundred
 and fifty and one, in the days of
 my lord abbot Simeon.
 And my sinful self, Elia, completed(?) and
 crowned (it).

The longest inscription, running to fifty-seven lines, was found near El Gantari, between Raqqa and Ras al-ʿAyn (Reshʿayna).²¹ Carved on the rectangular face of two large blocks of stone, it anathematizes ‘all Phantasiasts’, that is, followers of Julian of Halicarnassus, the former friend, but then bitter theological opponent, of Severus of Antioch. The controversy

¹⁸ Dated 1196/7; also in Add. 14645 of 935/6 and Paris syr. 235 (thirteenth century); a French summary is given by Nau 1910: 62–4. A Greek account features in the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Delehay 1902), cols 540–44.

¹⁹ Honigmann 1951: 191–2; it is also mentioned in the sixth-century theological tractate published by Lontie 1997: 18 (line 126).

²⁰ Private collection; my reading is based on a photograph that was once shown to me. It should be noted that the inscriptions are often damaged in the course of removal, and the tesserae may be restored incorrectly: this probably accounts for the *qoph*, instead of *beth*, in line 4 here.

²¹ Published by Mouterde 1960: 87–92.

between the two sides produced a large body of literature, and so it is intriguing to see it reflected in epigraphy as well. The second part of the inscription is a long list of over seventy names, headed by that of the abbot, Shem'on. Unfortunately the first part, with the narrative introduction, is rather damaged, but the general sense is clear: 'The Church, saved by the blood of the Only-Begotten, an[atthem]atizes all the Phantasiasts who are [...].... [Every]one who does not love our Lord [Jesus Chri]st, let him be anathema..... I, Shem'on, by the mer[cies] of God the Life-giver: let everyone who reads (this) pray for me and for everyone who has laboured on this work; and whoever does not confess that the Word from God suffered in the flesh and was crucified in the flesh and rose from the place of [the dead], let him be anathema.'

Another unusual inscription, dated 507/8, not only records the building of a church at Khirbet Hassan (near Dehes), but also specifies the costs, both in coinage and in kind: 'expended on it were: 580 darics and 430 modii of beans, wheat and lentils'.²²

The normal era used for dating in Syriac manuscripts of this period is the Seleucid, usually known as that 'of Alexander' or 'of the Greeks'. Although no era is named in the majority of the dated Syriac inscriptions it is likely to be the Seleucid (with the year beginning in October). Where a different era (in Syriac, *menyana* or *hušbana*, 'numbering', or 'reckoning')²³ is mentioned, we find those of Antioch and Apamea (see Appendix). Indiction datings occur in two inscriptions: the second of the two mosaic inscriptions from the monastery at Tell Bi'a reads:²⁴

<i>b'yrh</i>	in the month
<i>nysn dšnt</i>	Nisan of the year
<i>tš'm"</i>	nine hundred
<i>wšt</i>	and six,
<i>hndqṭywn'</i>	indiction
<i>dṭrysqdqṭ'</i>	of triskaidekate (13th)
<i>bywmy ršdyr'</i>	in the days of the abbot
<i>mry šmw'n'</i>	Mar Shamona
<i>hw' qwps'</i>	(the making of) the mosaic took place.

The use of the Greek numeral for indiction dates is normal in Syriac sources. It likewise occurs in a long dedicatory inscription, of twenty-nine

²² Pognon 1907: no. 82.

²³ For *menyana*, see the inscription of 515/6, cited above; also found in that of 533; *hušbana* occurs in inscriptions of 501/2 and 507/8 (see Appendix). Both terms feature in manuscripts.

²⁴ Krebernink 1991: no. 2.

lines, dated 605;²⁵ here, after a long list of names (including ten veterans (*wṭṛn*), all listed with their patronymics), the date comes towards the end:

<i>hwt dyn bšnt</i>	Now it took place in the year
<i>šm" whmšyn</i>	six hundred and fifty
<i>wlt bmnyn' d'ntyk</i>	and three by the reckoning of Antioch
<i>bšnt' 'wgdy'</i>	in the year ogdoe (8th)

In the early manuscripts indiction dating is found in those of 586 (Teshri I/October) and 633 (see Appendix).

Finally, it should be mentioned that the phraseology of the inscriptions can sometimes be closely paralleled in that of contemporary manuscript colophons. A good example is provided by a mosaic inscription of unknown provenance, commemorating the completion of 'this house' (evidently a church building) in September 504. The inscription includes a prayer, 'May God grant his tranquillity and peace in his churches and monasteries, and may he grant a good reward (*pur'ana ṭaba*) to everyone who laboured and lent a hand for our Lord's sake.' The prayer for peace was no doubt heartfelt after the devastation caused by Kawad's campaigns of 502/3, but what is interesting here is the fact that the phrase 'may he grant a good reward' is found in (British Library) Add. 14559 (of between 597 and 600) and Add. 14458 (undated, but very probably sixth century). The same idea, but slightly different wording, features in the inscription from Tell Bi'a of 509, quoted above. A formula which occurs very frequently in colophons of manuscripts is *kl dqr' nšl'*, 'let every one who reads (this) pray (for . . .)': this also features in an undated inscription of the fifth–sixth century (Littmann 1934: no. 62). Quite a number of other parallels of this sort can be found.

The symbiosis of Greek and Syriac, especially in Syria Prima in the sixth century, to which the inscriptions point, is a phenomenon which deserves attention, for it has some important implications. It is clear that many Syriac authors in the fifth to seventh centuries knew Greek well, and likewise a number of authors from Syria who wrote in Greek were familiar at least with the local spoken forms of Aramaic. But can one ever go on to speak of biculturalism in some cases? There seems to be only one author who definitely wrote in both languages, Rabbula of Edessa (d. 436), but the fact that large numbers of literary translations were made during late antiquity, Syriac into Greek as well as Greek into Syriac, suggests that there were people around who were at home in reading both languages.

²⁵ Salamé-Sarkis 1989, no. 1.

This raises the possibility that some Greek authors from Syria could have been familiar with works in Syriac, as well as vice versa. In the case of one author, Romanos (from Homs), there does indeed seem to be some internal evidence that he made use of Syriac sources.²⁶ Clearly this is an area that deserves serious investigation.

APPENDIX: DATED SYRIAC INSCRIPTIONS (FIRST TO MID-SEVENTH CENTURY CE)

All dates are converted to CE, with the date as it appears in the inscription given in brackets; the era is the Seleucid ('of the Greeks'; beginning in October, rather than September) unless otherwise stated; month and day are given if present. For the purposes of comparison, other dated Syriac materials (documents, manuscripts)²⁷ are also given, but indented; all 'Add.' manuscripts are in the British Library. If an inscription has been published more than once, only the most recent edition is listed (unless there is conflicting, or extra, information that is not accounted for in the later publication).

ABBREVIATIONS

- Abu Assaf 1972 = Abu Assaf, A. (1972) 'Syriac Inscriptions at the National Museum of Damascus', *AArchSyr* 22: 135–44 (in Arabic).
 Brock 2006 = Brock, S. P. (2006) 'St Aninas/Mar Hanina and his Monastery', *Analecta Bollandiana* 124: 5–10.
 Chabot 1929 = Chabot, J.-B. (1929) 'Inscriptions syriaques de Bennaoui', *Syria* 10: 252–6.
 Desreumaux 1999 = Desreumaux, A., Gaborit, J. and Caillou, J.-S. (1999) 'Nouvelles découvertes à Apamée d'Osrhoène', *CRAI*: 75–105.
 DH = Drijvers, H. J. W. and Healey, J. F. (1999) *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene*. Leiden.
 Halloun 1988 = Halloun, M. (1988) 'Two Syriac Inscriptions', *SBF* 38: 271–4.
 Harrak 1995 = Harrak, A. (1995) 'Notes on Syriac Inscriptions, I: The Inscription of Ma'ar-zayta', *Orientalia* 64: 77–9.
 Healey 2006 = Healey, J. F. (2006) 'A New Syriac Mosaic Inscription', *JSS* 51: 313–27.
IGLS = *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, I– (Paris, 1929–).
 Krebernik 1991 = Krebernik, M. (1991) 'Schriftfunde aus Tell Bi'a 1990', *Mitteilungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 123: 41–69.

²⁶ See Brock 1986: 91–6.

²⁷ Details of most (but not all) the dated manuscripts mentioned can readily be found in Hatch 1946.

- Littmann 1934 = Littmann, E. (1934) *Semitic Inscriptions* vol. II: Syriac Inscriptions. Leiden.
- Mouterde 1932 = Mouterde, P. and R. (1932) 'Inscriptions grecques de Souweida et de 'Ahire', *MUSJ* 16: 102–8.
- Mouterde 1942/3 = Mouterde, P. (1942–3) 'Inscription syriaque du Gebel Bil' as', *MUSJ* 25: 83–6.
- Mouterde 1945 = Mouterde, P. (1945) 'Inscriptions syriaques de haute Syrie', Appendix in R. Mouterde (1945) *Le Limes de Chalcis*. Paris.
- Naveh 1976 = Naveh, J. (1976) 'Syriac miscellanea', *'Atiqot* 11: 102–4.
- Palmer 1987 = Palmer, A. N. (1987) 'A Corpus of Inscriptions from Tur 'Abdin and Environs', *OC* 71: 53–139.
- Pognon 1907 = Pognon, H. (1907) *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul*. Paris.
- Puech 1988 = Puech, E. (1988) 'Une inscription syriaque sur mosaïque', *SBF* 38: 267–70.
- Sachau 1882 = Sachau, E. (1882) 'Edessenische Inschriften', *ZDMG* 36: 142–67.
- Salamé-Sarkis 1989 = Salamé-Sarkis, H. (1989) 'Syria grammata kai agalmata', *Syria* 66: 313–30.
- Steiner 1990 = Steiner, R. (1990) 'A Syriac Church Inscription from 504 CE', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 35: 99–108.
- 6 (317) Adar; Birecik: D-H, As55.
- 73 (385) Teshri I; Serrin: D-H, Bs2.
- 165 (476) Shebat; Sumatar: D-H, As36 and 37.
- 165 (476) 13th Adar; Sumatar: D-H, As29.
- 192 (503) Iyyar; Apamea (Osrhoene): Desreumaux 1999.
- 194 (505) Nisan; Edessa?: see note 4, above.
- 201/2 (513) Edessa: D-H, As16.
- 209 (<5>20) Adar; Edessa: D-H, As9.
- 224 (535) Nisan; Urfa: D-H, Am9.
- 226 (<5>37) Kanun II; Apamea (Osrhoene): Desreumaux 1999.
- 227/8 (539); al Mas'udiye: D-H, Bm1.
- 228 (<5>39) Tammuz; Edessa: D-H, Am7.
- 235/6 (547); Edessa: D-H, Am6.
- 240 (552) Kanun I; Osrhoene: D-H, P2 (legal document).
- 242 (553) Illul; Osrhoene: D-H, P3 (legal document).
- 243 (554) Iyyar; Dura Europos: D-H, P1 (= *P.Dura* 28; legal document).
- 259 (<5>70) Shebat; Edessa: D-H, Am1.
- 389 ([Antioch] 437) Xandikos; Babisqa: *IGLS* II 555.
- 411 (723) Teshri II; Edessa: Add. 12150.
- 434 (Antioch 482) Loos; Dar Qita: Littmann 1934: 4.
- 441/2 ([Antioch] 490); Qasr Iblisu: Littmann 1934: 11.
- 459/60 (771): Add. 14512.
- 462 (773) Nisan: St Petersburg, Public Library Syr. 1.
- 463/4 (775); Amid: Add. 14425.

- 471 (782) Adar: Huweijja Halawa: Abu Assaf 1972: 2.
 473 (Antioch 521) 17th Nisan; perhaps Qal`at Sim'an: Vatican Sir. 160.
 473/4 (Antioch 522); Khirbet al Khatib: Littman 1934: 7 = *IGLS* II 553.
 474 (785) Illul; Edessa: Add. 17182.
 491/2 and 495/6 ([Antioch] 540, 544); Basufan: Littmann 1934: 50.
 493 (804) Nisan; Monastery of Mar Hanina?: Puech 1988 and Brock 2006.
 493 (805) Teshri 1; Edessa: Sachau 1882 (no. 4).
 497 (808) 12th Illul: Halloun 1988.
 501/2 (Antioch 550); Surqanya: Littmann 1934: 57.
 504 (815) Illul: Steiner 1990.
 507/8 (Antioch 556); Khirbet Hassan, near Dehes: Pognon 1907: 82.
 509 (820) 15th Nisan; Monastery of Pa'nur: Add. 14542.
 509 (820) Ab; Tell Bi'a, near Raqqa: Krebern timer 1991: 1.
 510/11 (822); Mabbug: Add. 17126.
 512 (823) Kanun II: Add. 17182.
 512 (823) 24th Illul; Zebed (trilingual): *IGLS* II 310.
 513 ([Antioch] 561) Iyyar; Fidreh: Littmann 1934: 23.
 515/6 (Apamea 827); Ma'ar Zayta: Harrah 1995.
 518 (Apamea 830) Teshrin II: Add. 14571.
 522 (834) 21st Kanun I: Vatican Sir. 111.
 525/6 ([Antioch] 574); Kefr Nabu: Littmann 1934: 52.
 528 (839) Nisan: Vatican Sir. 140.
 528/9–537/8 (84.): Add. 14459.
 532 (843) 28th Iyyar: Add. 14445.
 532 (Bosra 427) 14th Haziran: Add. 17176.
 532 ([Antioch] 580); Fidreh: Littmann 1934: 24.
 533 (Antioch 581) Tammuz; Khirbet al Khatib: Littmann 1934: 8.
 533/4 (845); Edessa: Add. 14479.
 533/4 (845): Add. 12175.
 534 (845); Qartmin Monastery (Tur `Abdin): Palmer 1987: A.1.
 534 (845) 10th Haziran: Milan, Ambrosiana, A 296 Inf. (no. 22).
 535 (846) 10th Iyyar: Kafra d-Barta (near Apamea): Add. 14530.
 536 and 539/40 (847, 851) 27th Haziran: unpublished (private collection).
 539/40 (Antioch 550); Surqanya: Littmann 1934: 58.
 540/41 (852); Edessa: Add. 17107.
 543/4 or 550/1 ([Antioch] 592 or 599); Kalota: Littmann 1934: 54.
 545 (856) Monday 10th Nisan: Add. 14431.
 545/6(?) ([Antioch] 594(?)); Kalota: Littmann 1934: 55.
 547/8 (859); South Syria: Mouterde 1932.
 548 (859) Tammuz; Edessa: Vatican Sir. 12.
 550/51 (862): Add. 14610.
 551/2? ([Antioch?] 600); Abu'l Kudur: Littmann 1934: 2.
 552 (863) 20th Shebat; Sarmin: Vatican Sir. 112.
 553 (864) 30th Illul; Edessa: Add. 12166.
 554 (866) Kanun I: Monastery of Beth Mar Sargis: Add. 14635.

- 556 (868) Teshrin II; near Raqqa: Abu Assaf 1972: 1.
 557 (868) 5th Nisan: Add. 14558.
 563 (874) Ab; Nairab: Vatican Sir. 143.
 563/4 (875) Rasm al Hajal, Palmyrene: *IGLS* II 317 = Mouterde 1945: 10.
 564 (875) 20th Nisan: Vatican Sir. 137.
 564 (875) Ab; Monastery of Mar Quryaqos: Vatican Sir. 104.
 565 (876) Shebat; Edessa: Add. 17157.
 569 (880 'of Antiochenes') Iyyar: Add. 14599.
 569 (880) Iyyar; Sarmin: Add. 14597.
 575 (886) A[*dar*]/I[*yyar*]/A[*b*]; Jebel Bil'as, Palmyrene: Mouterde 1942/3.
 576 (887) 30th Tammuz; Sketis, Egypt: Vatican Sir. 142.
 576 (887) Ab: Al Dayr al Wastani: Abu Assaf 1972: 4.
 577/8 ([Antioch] 626); Der Sim'an: Littmann 1934: 26.
 578/9 ([Antioch] 627); Der Sim'an: Littmann 1934: 27.
 579/80 (891); Kefr Hout: Mouterde 1945: 7.
 581 (892) Haziran: Add. 17169.
 581 (892) 30th Tammuz: Vatican Sir. 138.
 pre 583 (894); Monastery of Mar Zakkai, Kallinikos: Add. 14464.
 584 (895) 29th Tammuz; Monastery of Gubba Barraya: Add. 12160.
 586 (897) Shebat: Monastery of John of Beth Zagba: Florence, Laur. Plut. I.
 586 ('Rabbula Gospels').
 586 ([8]98; Indiction []) Teshri I: Add. 14609.
 587/8 (899); Monastery of Maki(?): Add. 12158.
 593 (905) 4th Kanun I: Add. 17152.
 593/4 (905); Stablat (Pognon)/Bennaoui (Chabot): Pognon 1907: 19; Chabot 1929: 2.
 594/5, or 604/5, or 644/5; (96[.]): Naveh 1976: 1.
 595 (906) Nisan: Tell Bi'a: Krebern timer 1991: 2.
 598/9 (910): Add. 17102.
 599/600 (911; Khosroes [II] 10); Tell Dinawar, Beth Nuhadra: Add. 14460.
 601/2 (Antioch 650); Tell 'Ada: Littmann 1934: 16.
 603 (914) Illul: Add. 14587.
 604 (915) 15th Tammuz; Mathan, near Bostra: Add. 12170.
 605 (Antioch 653; [Indiction] 8): Salamé-Sarkis 1989: 1.
 611 (922) 11th Illul; Monastery of the Star, Hina: Add. 12135.
 613/4 (925); Milan, Ambrosiana, A 296 Inf. (no. 20).
 614/5 (Khosroes [III] 25); Nisibis: Add. 14471.
 615 (926) 1st Ab: Paris syr. 69.
 621/2 (933): Add. 14478.
 624 (935) Ab; for Gedalta: Add. 14472.
 633 (945; Indiction 7) Kanun I; Beth Hala, near Damascus: Wolfenbüttel 3.1.300 Aug.fol.

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*Samaritan writing and writings**Dan Barag*

The interest of modern scholarship in the history of the Samaritan people, their literature and the material remains of their past is a continuous trend started in 1907 by James Allen Montgomery.¹ The script on the early silver coins of Samaria from the fourth century BCE is palaeo-Aramaic, however, using in some cases palaeo-Hebrew letter forms. Meshorer and Qedar referred to the script of the legends on these coins as revealing a 'mixed nature'.² The early history of the Samaritan alphabet and in particular the period of its inception have remained an enigma. Montgomery refrained from suggesting a precise date for its beginning, whilst Purvis concluded 'that the Samaritan script branched off from the paleo-Hebrew in the late Hasmonaeen period'.³ Other scholars have suggested the first century CE.⁴ The present discussion aims to establish at what time the Samaritan alphabet was introduced, or rather created, and what its uses were.

THE MOUNT GERIZIM INSCRIPTIONS

The publication in 2004 of the Aramaic, Hebrew and Samaritan inscriptions excavated on Mt Gerizim in 1982–2004 presents a very important corpus of epigraphic material.⁵ The 395 inscriptions (almost all fragmentary) include 380 in Aramaic and 'square' Jewish script (nos. 1–380: 'Lapidary Aramaic and Proto-Jewish') and 9 in palaeo-Hebrew (nos. 382–90: 'New-Hebrew' script) ascribed to the third and second centuries BCE,

¹ Montgomery 1907.

² Meshorer and Qedar 1999: 14–5, chart, pp. 78–9; see the letters, כ, ה, י, ז, א, ו.

³ Purvis 1968: 21, 50–2; The comparative epigraphical discussion by Purvis of the Hasmonean palaeo-Hebrew and Samaritan scripts, at 18–52, does not consider the evidence for dating the Samaritan inscriptions; see, at 21, his 'Suggestion of Jewish paleo-Hebrew' and 'Samaritan paleo-Hebrew' dating from the Hasmonean period, however without any evidence for the date of 'Samaritan paleo-Hebrew'.

⁴ This follows from accepting a first-century CE date for the inscribed capital from Emmaus; for this problem see below and nn. 21–4.

⁵ Magen, Misgav and Tsfania *Gerizim*.

antedating the ruthless destruction of the Samaritan temple by John Hyrcanus I in c. 113/112 BCE. The excavations revealed only four Samaritan inscriptions (nos. 392–5) attributed to medieval times. Only ten of several dozens of Greek inscriptions from the excavations were published and attributed to Samaritans during the fourth and fifth centuries CE. Three inscriptions mention donations of *solidi*, perhaps for the maintenance of the site. These inscriptions of Samaritan pilgrims and worshippers belong to the period from Constantine I to Zenon (474–91), the latter of whom built a church on the site dedicated to Mary Theotokos (c. 484 CE). Thus Mount Gerizim was accessible to the Samaritans for about a century and three quarters.⁶

Following the repeated destructions of the site, none of the inscriptions was discovered in its original position and their dating depends, therefore, on historical and epigraphic considerations. Following the evidence from Mt Gerizim, one may assume that the Samaritan script was either not extant or not used for the kinds of inscriptions erected on the site during the fourth–fifth centuries CE until the reign of Zenon. The total prevalence of the Greek inscriptions has a parallel in the contemporary Samaritan synagogue at El-Khirbe, 2.5 km south-west of Sebaste. Less than one half of the mosaic pavement of that synagogue has survived, preserving seven inscriptions of donors in Greek as well as an inscription in Greek on the lintel of the building.⁷ One could ask the hypothetical question whether any of the inscriptions in the Aramaic-Jewish script from Mt Gerizim, attributed *in toto* to the Hellenistic period, date from the fourth century CE. However, although such a possibility exists there is no evidence to support such an assumption.

SAMARITAN INSCRIBED POTTERY LAMPS

The study of Palestinian pottery lamps from the Hellenistic period to medieval times has made considerable strides during the last few decades. At present it is possible to date such lamps to within relatively short periods and to point to the geographical area in which they were popular. The identification of a particular class of pottery lamps as Samaritan was put forward by V. Sussman in 1978 and followed up in her numerous

⁶ Di Segni 1990; Magen 2002: 387–91, figs. 5–11; Magen, Misgav and Tsania *Gerizim*: 13.

⁷ Di Segni 1993; Magen 1993: 194–204.

subsequent publications.⁸ These lamps are characteristic of the central part of Palestine – the hill country of Samaria, Mount Carmel and the coastal region to the west. Occasional finds of such lamps come from sites in the areas to the north, in Galilee and Western Galilee. The geographical distribution of the finds accords well with what is known about the Samaritan settlement areas in the late Roman and Byzantine periods.

The lamps have a rounded body and a broad nozzle. Their central filling-hole was usually left closed, to be pierced by the customers before use. These lamps are decorated with a wide variety of geometric patterns and at times with seven-branched candlesticks, gabled structures and various objects. It seems that the decorations represent the folk art popular among the Samaritans in that period. Sussman attributes this class of lamps to a period of about three centuries, from the late third–early fourth century to the sixth century CE.

Mould-made pottery lamps bearing Samaritan inscriptions are rather rare. In 1936 Mayer and Reifenberg published such a lamp (below, no. 7). Their number has increased since then to a total of ten specimens, from eight different moulds.

Catalogue

1. Lamp with a large filling-hole, short and broad nozzle with grooves along its sides; pyramidal handle at the rear end. Between the filling-hole and wick-hole representation of an open Torah scroll inscribed ברוך־שמו־לעולם 'Blessed be His name for ever'. On the shoulder on the left-hand side a gabled structure supported by two columns, perhaps a Torah shrine; decoration on the right-hand side unclear. The lamp is of unknown provenance. J. Ch. Kaufman Collection, Antwerp (Fig. 12.1).⁹
 - 1a. About half of the front side of a lamp from the same mould as lamp no. 1. On the right-hand side of the shoulder a jug (of which only a small section has survived on lamp no.1). Of unknown provenance; in the same collection as no.1.¹⁰
2. Lamp of a type similar to no. 1. Across the broad nozzle and along its sides a ladder pattern. The filling-hole was originally closed, opened by

⁸ Sussman 1978; 1983; 1986–7; 2002.

⁹ Sussman 2002: 348, fig. 5; L. 8.5 cm; figs. 1–6 illustrated by kind permission of Mr J. Ch. Kaufman, Antwerp.

¹⁰ Unpublished; L. 6.2 cm.



Fig. 12.1 Lamp no. 1.

piercing before use. Between the filling-hole and wick-hole a gabled tetrastyle structure and in it the legend קומה על 'Rise upon'. On the shoulder a seven-branched candlestick, (menorah), incense shovel and ram's horn. The lamp was unearthed at Um Khaled together with twenty-five uninscribed lamps of different Samaritan types in an ancient cistern, used as a dumping place in the late Roman and Byzantine periods (Um Khaled is a small settlement 16.5 km north-north-east of Apollonia, in the area of modern Netanyah).¹¹

3. Lamp with a rounded-oval body merging into a broad nozzle decorated along its sides with a ladder pattern and a stylised palm branch pattern around the body; large, closed filling-hole, pierced by small

¹¹ Sussman 1986–7: 133, fig. 1; Naveh 1988: 38–9, pl. 8: G; L. 9.5 cm. *IDAM* (= Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums) 82.1051. Sussman and Naveh read the legend as קומה; however it reads קומה על (עקה/ומל). The text relates (with the addition of על) to Num. 10:35.

hole. Pyramidal handle at the rear end. Between the filling-hole and the wick-hole a three-line legend, divided by three horizontal lines: אין\כאל\ישרון 'There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun' quoting Num. 33:26. Found at Caesarea Maritima in a dump from an archaeological excavation.¹²

4. Fragment; section of the nozzle between the filling-hole and wick-hole. It bears the legend: ברוך\אלהנו\ [ל]עולם\ברוך [ש]מו [לעולם] 'Blessed be our God forever, blessed be His name forever' between two pairs of horizontal lines above and below the legend. Of unknown provenance. A. Spaer Collection, Jerusalem.¹³
 - 4a. Small fragment of a lamp from a similar mould. Preserved is a section of lines 1–2 of the legend: ... [ב]רוך\ [א]להנו. 'Blessed be our God ...'. Surface find from Caesarea. Sdot Yam Museum.¹⁴
5. Oval lamp decorated on its top side with a chevron pattern and dots; pierced filling-hole. On the bottom side, around the flat base, the first thirteen letters (א–ט) of the Samaritan alphabet. The letters are retrograde, i.e. going from left to right. Of unknown provenance. H. Kaufman Collection, Antwerp (Figs. 12.2–5).¹⁵

Lamps nos. 1, 1a and 2 belong to the early group of Samaritan ornamented lamps from the fourth century CE. Lamp no. 3 and fragments nos. 4 and 4a present a further development of the Samaritan lamp types, marked by a broad nozzle merging into the body dating from the late fourth–fifth centuries CE. Lamp no. 5 dates from the fourth–fifth centuries CE.

6. Lamp with a slightly oval body merging into a broad spatulate nozzle. Large circular filling-hole; small conical knob-handle at rear of body ornamented with geometric patterns.

On the nozzle legend: הרם הו(א) לא תזרה לא תצמח 'It is banned (Deut. 7:26); it shall not be sown nor shall it bear' (Deut. 29:22). The letters are retrograde. Discovered at Tel Ha-Midge, 2.2 km south of the

¹² Ben-Zvi 1961; L. 9 cm. *IDAM* 61.440. Sussman 1978: 239–40, 245, pl. 41; A; Sussman 1986–7: 133, fig. 2; Sussman 2002: 347–8, fig. 4. For this type of lamp dated at Beth Shean to the fourth–fifth centuries CE see Hadad *Oil Lamps*: 36–7, no. 117.

¹³ Naveh 1996: 48, fig. 4; L. 4.2 cm. For this type of lamp see Hadad *Oil Lamps*: no. 119, dated to the fourth–fifth centuries CE.

¹⁴ Naveh 1996: 48, n. 17; Sussman 2002: 348, fig. 6; the shape of *he*, *kaf*, and *nun* differs on the two moulds.

¹⁵ Naveh 1988: 39, pl. 9: A–C; L. 7.1 cm. Naveh's reference to a 1, *nun*, on the lamp is erroneous. For this type of lamp see Hadad *Oil Lamps*: 24–6, figs. 47, 48, 50, dated at Beth Shean to the fifth century CE.



Fig. 12.2 Lamp no. 5 – front side.



Fig. 12.3 Lamp no. 5 – back side.



Fig. 12.4 Lamp no. 5 – back side, left (letters 1–8).



Fig. 12.5 Lamp no. 5 – back side, right (letters 9–12)

ancient mound of Beth Shean (Scythopolis), on the site of numerous workshops as well as a potter's workshop.¹⁶

¹⁶ Zori 1954; L. 10 cm., *IDAM* 54.12; Ben-Zvi 1955; Ben-Hayim 1955; Sussman 1986–7: 133, fig. 3; Naveh 1988: 37, pl. 8: E–F; Sussman 2002: 349, fig. 8. For a lamp with a similar nozzle, from Beth Shean, dated to the fifth–early sixth centuries, see Hadad *Oil Lamps*: 56, 61, fig. 266.

- 6a. Additional fragments of lamps made in the same mould as no. 6, from the same site.¹⁷
7. Lamp with oval-pointed body; horseshoe-shaped filling-hole and raised lug handle at rear end of body. Trapezoid cross-section at mid-body. Body decorated with stylised palm branches and geometric patterns. Between filling-hole and wick-hole a short legend: נר תמיד. 'An eternal lamp' (Exod. 27:20; Lev. 24:2). Of unknown provenance. Purchased in Jerusalem in 1935. Collection of Prof. A. Reifenberg;¹⁸ on loan to the Israel Museum. Lamps nos. 6 and 6a date from the sixth century, and lamp no. 7 belongs to a type prevalent in the late sixth–seventh centuries CE.

The legends on lamps Nos. 2, 3, 6 and 7 quote or are closely connected to the text of the Pentateuch. 'Rise upon' of lamp No. 2 refers to Num. 10:35, 'And . . . Moses said, Rise up, O Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered.' However, the legend on the lamp adds על 'upon'. Lamp no. 3 quotes Deut. 33:26, 'There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun' which follows the blessing of Moses upon the children of Israel before his death. Lamp No. 7 refers to the lighting of the lamp in the tabernacle perpetually, Exod. 27:20, Lev. 24:2. Lamp no. 6 refers to parts of the curses against idolatry and those who turn away to it in Deut. 7:26, 29:23, 'It is banned' Deut. 7:26; 'it shall not be sown, nor shall it bear', Deut. 29:22 (cf. Lev. 25:4).

The blessing on Lamp nos. 1 and 1a, 'Blessed be His name for ever', occurs frequently in Samaritan inscriptions and on nos. 4 and 4a. 'Blessed be our God forever, blessed be His name forever' is related to Samaritan liturgy. Lamp no. 5 bears the letters א-נ of the Samaritan abecedar. Naveh compared it to a sixth-century CE pottery lamp bearing the letters A–N of the Greek abecedar and suggested that both lamps are connected to magic practices.

The Samaritan legends on pottery lamps have been discussed by I. Ben-Zvi, Z. Ben-Hayim and extensively in two studies by J. Naveh.¹⁹ The use of these lamps remains an enigma. Five lamps come from different sites – no. 2 from a small village (Umm Khaled), nos. 3 and 4a from Caesarea, and nos. 6 and 6a from Beth Shean. However, for the time being,

¹⁷ Naveh 1988: 37, n. 6, *IDAM* 56.94.

¹⁸ Mayer and Reifenberg 1936; Sussman 1986–7: 133, fig. 16; Naveh 1988: 37; Naveh 1996: 48; Sussman 2002: 343. At Beth Shean this type has been dated to the late sixth century CE but it was prevalent in the Umayyad period, see Hadad *Oil Lamps*: 74–8, Type 32, variant 2, figs. 327–30, 332, 335–6.

¹⁹ Ben-Hayim 1955; Ben-Zvi 1955 and 1961; Naveh 1988 and 1996.

there is no evidence that such lamps were placed in tombs or used in a funerary context. Whether these lamps, like lamp no. 5, were used for magic practices remains obscure.

For the present study the Samaritan inscribed lamps furnish evidence for the occurrence of the Samaritan script in the fourth century CE and the use of such lamps during the fourth–seventh centuries CE.

EARLY SAMARITAN LAPIDARY INSCRIPTIONS

Two Samaritan inscriptions have been assigned dates earlier than the fourth century CE: 1. The capital from Emmaus and 2. The inscribed lintel from Beit el-Ma.

The capital from Emmaus

In 1881 Clermont-Ganneau recorded a limestone capital, in debased Ionic style, discovered at Emmaus-Nicopolis. The capital was found, in secondary use, in the floor of the northern aisle of the twelfth-century church, built during the days of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. It has elliptical volutes and no further ornaments. On one side it bears a carved *tabula ansata* with a Samaritan legend ברוךשמ/ולעולם and on the opposite side the legend EIC ΘEOC. On its base is engraved the Greek numeral Ϛ (6), perhaps a mason's mark (Fig. 12.6). Clermont-Ganneau's discussion of 1882 includes valid observations and conclusions which have been ignored in subsequent studies of the capital.²⁰

Clermont-Ganneau listed Christian inscriptions with the EIC ΘEOC acclamation and noted 'the style of the capital and the presence of the Greek inscription (which from its appearance we should attribute to the fifth or sixth centuries after Christ)'. He also observed that the diameter of the column of the capital 'could not have exceeded 0.36 m, which would only give a column of very modest height' and concluded that 'it could only have formed part of some interior erection, an altar, a ciborium, or even a baptistery'. The identification of the inscription as Samaritan and the contemporaneity of the Samaritan and Greek inscriptions have remained accepted since its discovery.

Scholars of Semitic epigraphy showed considerable interest in the Samaritan inscription on the Emmaus capital. In 1941 Taylor suggested

²⁰ Clermont-Ganneau 1882: 24–33; for the attribution to the fifth–sixth centuries CE, see 27. See also the discussion by Vincent and Abel 1932: 235–7, pl. XXV: 1–2.

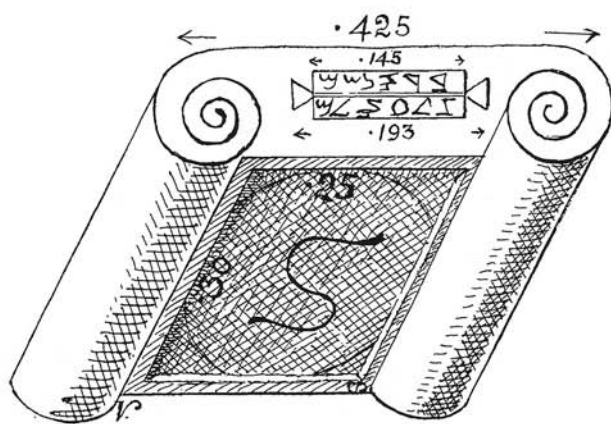


Fig. 12.6 Capital from Emmaus (after Vincent and Abel 1932, pl. 25 and fig. 105).

a date in the first century BCE.²¹ Albright compared it, in the same year, to the script on the 'Year Four' coins of the Jewish war and attributed it to the first century CE.²² Purvis suggested, in 1968, a date in the first century CE, but added that it might be as old as the first century BCE.²³ Naveh followed suit and dated it to the first century CE.²⁴ However, none of these scholars discussed the chronological implications of the Greek legend ΕΙC ΘΕΟC. The earliest dated inscription with this acclamation dates from 287 CE. Negev explored the occurrence of this acclamation and suggested that in Palestine it does not seem to antedate the mid-fourth century CE.²⁵ Di Segni listed sixty-two examples of it, mostly from Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Batanea and the Hauran, among them numerous occurrences from Samaritan contexts. Di Segni refers to the Emmaus capital as dating from the late Roman period.²⁶

It seems very likely that the capital formed part of the Holy Ark, *Aron ha-Qodesh*, of the Samaritan synagogue at Emmaus. The decorations of the Holy Ark probably included two (or four) columns with inscribed Ionic capitals, each (or each pair) placed in front of the facade, on one side of the doors of the Holy Ark. The mosaic pavements of the Samaritan synagogue of El-Khirbe and Kh. Samara, of the fourth–fifth centuries CE, preserve representations of temples with facades similar to the facade of a Holy Ark.²⁷ These are, probably, meant to show the idealised Samaritan temple on Mt Gerizim in days to come. A tetrastyle temple – Holy Ark facade with Ionic columns – belonging to an earlier phase, was also discovered in the mosaic pavements of the synagogue of Kh. Samara.²⁸ The mosaic pavement of the sixth-century synagogue of Beth Shean preserves a representation of an arch resting on two columns inside a distyle gabled structure.²⁹ This may well be an idealised representation of the temple on Mt Gerizim. The excavations of that synagogue yielded a small debased Ionic capital (lower diameter 0.36 m, as at Emmaus) and a small Attic base (0.4 × 0.4 m, diameter of column 0.30 m) which apparently belonged to the entablature of the Holy Ark of that synagogue.³⁰

The inscribed capital from Emmaus does not antedate the mid-fourth century CE, as is demonstrated by its ΕΙC ΘΕΟC inscription – an acclamation which became prevalent in Palestine at that time. However, it seems better to revert to Clermont-Ganneau's initial dating, from 1882, to the fifth

²¹ Taylor 1941: 5. ²² Albright 1941. ²³ Purvis 1968: 22–3.

²⁴ Naveh 1996: 48; Naveh 2002: 373, 375. ²⁵ Negev 1977: 62–4.

²⁶ Di Segni 1994: 102, no. 25; see also nos. 18 and 18a from the Samaritan synagogue at El-Khirbe.

²⁷ Magen 1993: 199, 211, figs. 5, 7, 8, 10, 25–7; see also the relief, fig. 32.

²⁸ Magen 1993: 213, fig. 28. ²⁹ Zori 1967: pl. 29: 5. ³⁰ Zori 1967: 158, fig. 8.

or sixth century CE. This is supported by the argument that ascribing the capital to the first century CE would introduce a gap of over two centuries between it and the earliest Samaritan inscribed pottery lamps without any evidence for the existence of a Samaritan script during that time.

The lintel from Beit el-Ma

Torrential rains in February 1935 exposed in the fields near Ain Beit el-Ma, 1 km west of Shechem-Neapolis, a Samaritan inscribed lintel. Two sections of the lintel are preserved, measuring 1.5 m and 1.1 m respectively. The missing section between the two sections may have measured about 0.2 m. The larger section measures 0.85 m in height and 0.42 in breadth. The original length of the lintel probably exceeded 3 m. Along the front side of the lintel is a flat band, 0.27 m in height, bearing the Samaritan inscription, between two fasciae, each decorated by a central horizontal groove. A torus-like frieze, decorated with a laurel leaf pattern, forms the top of the lintel.

The inscription is an abbreviated version of the Decalogue according to the Samaritan text of Exod. 11 conflated with Deut. 27:4 of the Hebrew text. It reads:

אנכי יהוה. לא יהיה לך. אלהים. אחריים. על פני. \ שמור. את. יום.
השבת. לקדשו. כבוד. את. \ אביך. ואת. אמך. \ לא. תגנב. לא. תענה.
ברעך. עד. שוא. לא. תחמד. בית. רעך. \ תקימו. האבנים. האלה. אשר. אנכי. מצוה.
אתכם. הי.ום. בה.ך. גריזים.

I am the Lord. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Honour thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house. Ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day in Mount Gerizim.

Line 4 corresponds to Deut. 27:4 of the Hebrew text, but reads Gerizim for Ebal.

The lintel was published by Ben-Zvi in 1935 with *in situ* photographs.³¹ He attributed it to a twelfth-century synagogue mentioned in a medieval Samaritan source. Sukenik rejected Ben-Zvi's dating and drew attention to the lintel's style, which is similar to that of the synagogues at Kefar Bar'am and Nabratein in Galilee. He concluded that the lintel and inscription date from the late Roman period, and are not later than the fourth century CE.³²

³¹ Ben-Zvi 1935 and 1936.

³² Sukenik 1935–6.

The inscription was published again in 1941 by Taylor, who was not aware of the previous publications. The photographs published by him were taken after the removal of the lintel to the Palestine Archaeological Museum. Hamilton, the Director of Antiquities, commented: 'The white patches observable over some of the letters are the beginning of an attempt to deface the inscription, and occurred during the few days that elapsed between discovery of the stone and its transfer to the Museum.' Indeed, the *in situ* photographs show the inscription before it was damaged. Hamilton (quoted by Taylor) also suggested an early third-century CE date 'from the style of the lintel'.³³ Late in 1941 Ben-Zvi published a rejoinder in which he drew attention to his and Sukenik's earlier publications. At that time Ben-Zvi suggested that the synagogue was repaired in the twelfth century and that the inscription 'is to be dated to a time prior to Islam and prior to the persecutions of Justinian. A closer dating seems to me impossible.'³⁴

The lintel undoubtedly dates from the late Roman period but there are no means by which it may be dated more precisely. Hamilton did not provide any evidence for his early third-century CE date. Sukenik compared the lintel to those from Kefar Bar'am and Nabratein. The latter lintel bears a Hebrew dedicatory inscription, deciphered by Avigad, dated to 494 years after the destruction of the Temple, i.e. 564 CE.³⁵ The inscription, thus, postdates the erection of the third–fourth centuries CE synagogue of Nabratein by a considerable period of time. The same may apply to the Beit el-Ma inscription as the style of the script of the Beit el-Ma inscription seems later than that of the Emmaus capital and the inscribed pottery lamps, and closer to that of the medieval Samaritan Decalogue inscriptions. However, palaeography is a rather unsafe way of establishing the chronology of Samaritan inscriptions. It seems therefore safer to assume that this inscription was probably engraved on the lintel after the late Roman period – but when, remains impossible to ascertain.

SAMARITAN SYNAGOGUE MOSAIC INSCRIPTIONS

Greek mosaic inscriptions, mostly of donors, were discovered in the Samaritan synagogues of Sha'alvim-Salbit, El-Khirbe and Zur-Natan.³⁶ Mosaic inscriptions in the Samaritan script dating from the Byzantine period are rather rare. In 1949 Sukenik excavated a Samaritan synagogue

³³ Taylor 1941: 3. ³⁴ Ben-Zvi 1941: 3. ³⁵ Avigad 1960.

³⁶ Sukenik 1949: 29, pl. xv; Magen 2002: 399–413, figs. 26–34; Reich 1994: 231–3, figs. 4, 6, 8. Todd 1951.

at Sha'alvim-Salbit, about 3.5 km north of Emmaus.³⁷ The synagogue was a rectangular building measuring 15.4×8.05 m on a north-north-east-south-south-west axis, i.e. orientated toward Mt Gerizim. A Samaritan inscription was discovered in the central section of the northern part of the hall, in front of the place where the *bemah* and Ark of the Law must have been. The inscription reads: יהוה.ימלך.עולם.ועד 'The Lord will reign for ever and evermore' (Exod. 15:18). Apart from this acclamation there were remains of two dedicatory inscriptions in Greek and a representation of two candelabra (menorahs) flanking a stylised, stepped mountain, evidently Mt Gerizim, as suggested by Sukenik. Above this pavement were poorly preserved patches of another mosaic pavement. Sukenik suggested that the synagogue was built in the fourth century CE and repaved after the Samaritan revolts. The Samaritan inscription belongs to the renovation of the synagogue and probably dates from the sixth century.

Remains of a Samaritan synagogue near Tell Qasile in Ramat Aviv, northern Tel Aviv, were published in 1978 by Haya Kaplan.³⁸ Only about one-third of the building of about 7.2×7.7 m survived. The structure dates, according to the excavator, from the early seventh century CE. A Samaritan mosaic inscription mentions two donors, Maximona and Proxena, as suggested by Tsafrir,³⁹ or Maximus and Proxenus, as suggested by Naveh.⁴⁰ Two Greek mosaic inscriptions were unearthed as well, one of a donor and one a blessing on Israel and the place of worship. The excavator identified the building as a Christian-Samaritan church, something for which there is, however, no support in the evidence.⁴¹

A mosaic inscription in Samaritan script was excavated at Beth Shean by Zori in a room adjoining a synagogue. Zori insisted that the synagogue is a Jewish place of worship because its mosaic decorations do not reveal any connection to Samaritan art.⁴² Naveh showed that the text of the inscription is in Greek, despite the use of the Samaritan script, and mentions two donors: Ephrai(m) and Anan. He also assumed that the synagogue is Samaritan.⁴³

For the present discussion it is noteworthy that the Samaritan mosaic inscriptions, one acclamation and two dedicatory inscriptions, date from the Byzantine period.

³⁷ Sukenik 1949: 25–30, pls. xv–xvi.

³⁸ Kaplan 1978: 80.

³⁹ Tsafrir 1981.

⁴⁰ Naveh 1981: 222.

⁴¹ Kaplan 1978: 80.

⁴² Zori 1967: 167, 73*.

⁴³ Naveh 1981.

SAMARITAN BRONZE AMULETS, RINGS AND BRACELETS

Amulets, rings and bracelets bearing Samaritan legends are dealt with in numerous studies by Raffaeli, Kaplan and Pumer.⁴⁴ Reich presented, in 2002, a general survey of the evidence.⁴⁵ Except for a single plaque made of haematite these objects are all made of bronze. The amulets are oval pendants with a suspension loop at the top. The rings are polygonal, either octagonal or nine-sided, bearing script on each of their sides. A fragmentary bracelet from Caesarea consisted of a band with an oval inscribed medallion.⁴⁶ Amulets and rings of this kind were discovered mainly in the coastal area between Caesarea and Jaffa as well as in the hill country of Samaria, with a few occasional finds outside this area, e.g. one from Corinth.⁴⁷ Some of these apotropaic objects were unearthed in tombs.

The inscribed texts comprise a few words from the Pentateuch, the divine names and invocations for divine protection and help.⁴⁸ The blessing 'there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun', Deut. 33:26 appears frequently on these objects as on the lamp from Caesarea (above, no. 3).

The dates assigned to the amulets, rings etc. are from the late Roman period to the sixth century CE.⁴⁹ The oval amulets are very similar to Christian amulets of the sixth century, e.g. from the tomb at Gush Halav (Gischala – el Djish) in Upper Galilee.⁵⁰ The homogeneous nature of this

⁴⁴ Raffaeli 1920–1; Kaplan 1967 and 1975; Pumer 1987: 254, 258 suggested that Samaritans made such amulets exclusively for the use of Jews and Christians. This seems very unlikely and was rejected, e.g. by Reich 2002: 308, who refers to the magical character of the legends on the Samaritan lamps; see in particular above lamps nos. 5 and 6.

⁴⁵ Reich 2002. ⁴⁶ Hamburger 1959.

⁴⁷ Davidson 1952: 260, fig. 59, pl. III: 2100; Kaplan 1980.

⁴⁸ See Reich 2002: 306:

'The Lord is a man of war', Exod. 15:3 – amulets 1, 3, 5–7, 11, 16, 19.

'The Lord is his name', Exod. 15:3 – amulets 1, 7, 9, 15, 16, 19; rings 18, 20, 21.

'The Lord is victorious' (Sam. version), Exod. 15:3 – amulets 1, 9, 15; ring 18.

'I am the Lord that healeth thee', Exod. 15:26 – amulets 3, 6, 9, 11, 16; rings 15, 18, 20, 21.

'And he made the laver of brass', Exod. 38:8 – amulets 3, 6, 11.

'Rise up Lord', Num. 10:35 – amulets 1, 5, 7, 10, 16, 19; ring 18.

'That thou Lord art seen face to face', Num. 14:14 – amulets 3(?), 6, 11.

'God is one Lord', Deut. 6:4 – amulets 1, 7, 15, 19; ring 18.

'There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun', Deut. 33:26 – amulets 1, 5, 7, 10, 16, 19; rings 9, 12, 15, 18.

⁴⁹ A Samaritan amulet from Tyre was found in a *loculus* without any accompanying objects. The two adjacent *loculi* produced two coins of Constantine and one of Constans (337–50 CE). A date before the second half of the fourth century seems unlikely. For this amulet see Lazachmeur and Margain 1982; Chéhab 1985: 609, Chéhab 1986: pl. XLVIII: 3–4.

⁵⁰ Makhoully 1939: pl. XXXI, 5, 7, XXXII, h 1–2 and others mentioned in the inventory. Makhoully 1939: 46 attributed the tomb to the fourth–fifth centuries. However the finds and in particular the glass vessels point to a date in the fifth and mainly sixth centuries CE.

group points to a maximal range of the fourth–sixth centuries, similar to the lamps nos. 1–6, but maybe of a shorter duration.

PALAEO-HEBREW IN SAMARITAN DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE FOURTH CENTURY CE

The fragmentary inscriptions from the excavations of the temple on Mt Gerizim demonstrate the occasional use of palaeo-Hebrew by Samaritans before the destruction of the temple in c. 113/112 BCE.⁵¹ A small papyrus fragment from Masada written in palaeo-Hebrew mentions [הגרזי] (written in one word). It seems to be a fragment from a Samaritan hymn which reached the site before 73 CE.⁵² In contrast to the small number of examples of palaeo-Hebrew used by Samaritans in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, there is evidence from Jewish sources on this matter. The Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 21b preserves a *baraita* (a non-canonical *Mishnah*) saying:

אמר רב חסדא אמר מר עוקבא: בתחילה ניתנה תורה לישראל בכתב עברי ולשון הקודש.
חזרה וניתנה להם בימי עזרא בכתב אשורית ובלשון ארמי. ביררו להן ישראל כתב
אשורית ולשון הקודש והניחו להדיטות כתב עברית ולשון ארמי. מאן הדיטות – אמר
רב חסדא כותאי.

Rav Hisda said, Mar Uqbah said: Originally the Torah was given to Israel in Hebrew script and the holy tongue; later in the time of Ezra, the Torah was given in the Assyrian script and the Aramaic language. They selected for Israel the Assyrian script and the holy tongue, leaving the Hebrew script and the Aramaic language to the simple folk. Who are the simple folk – Rav Hisda said Cutheans.

Rav Hisda was head of the yeshivah at Surah in Babylon and according to Jewish tradition died in 620 of the Seleucid Era (308/9 CE).⁵³ This literary testimony shows that the Samaritans were using palaeo-Hebrew for the text of the Pentateuch in the third century.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE SAMARITAN SCRIPT

A review of the pottery lamps bearing Samaritan legends shows that these lamps belong to the fourth–seventh centuries CE. The capital from Emmaus, inscribed with a blessing in Samaritan and usually attributed to the first century, also bears the Greek invocation EIC ΘEOC, which

⁵¹ Magen, Misgav and Tsfania *Gerizim*: nos. 382–90. ⁵² Talmon 1999: 138–49.

⁵³ For the date of R. Hisda's death see Bacher 1878: 106, n. 1; Rabinovich 1988: 101.

excludes a date before the fourth century. The three mosaic inscriptions in this script date from the sixth–early seventh century and the bronze amulets, rings and bracelet are from the late fourth–sixth centuries and may even date from the fifth(?)–sixth centuries CE. The Samaritan alphabet, thus, was introduced or rather created in the fourth century CE. This seems to tally well with the reference in the Babylonian Talmud, from the third century, that the Samaritans were still using the palaeo-Jewish script for the text of the Pentateuch. The Samaritan texts are almost exclusively sacred texts quoting the Pentateuch or, probably, Samaritan liturgy. Two inscriptions are devoted to donors in synagogues. This script is not attested in epitaphs nor for ordinary use and may, therefore, be defined as a script reserved for hagiographic purposes. In normal daily life Samaritans used Greek and probably Aramaic in the Jewish ‘square’ script.

The Samaritan alphabet has its roots in the palaeo-Hebrew alphabet. A comparison of the palaeo-Hebrew script, preserved by the coins of the Jewish war (63–70 CE) and Bar Kokhba war (132–5 CE) and the Samaritan inscriptions of the fourth–sixth centuries CE, makes possible some interesting observations (Fig. 12.7).

1. Ten letters are similar to the palaeo-Hebrew letters of the coins כ, ה, ז, ל, מ, נ, ע, פ, ש. The ש is particularly close to some examples on the coins. Three letters, ה, ו, ק, are reminiscent of the coin script.
2. The ט and צ seem to have their root in early palaeo-Hebrew (the צ differs markedly from the coins of the Jewish War).
3. The letters ט and פ follow the Aramaic Hebrew script and the ו and י are different and apparently new creations.
4. The resemblance between the ה and י is, probably, not accidental as both letters are abbreviations of the divine name.

Clermont-Ganneau had previously drawn attention in 1882 to the similarity between the coins of the Bar Kokhba war and the coins of Year Four of the Jewish war (attributed at that time to the Hasmoneans) and the Samaritan alphabet.⁵⁴ The use of palaeo-Hebrew for writing copies of the Pentateuch in the third century CE, as mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud, and the roots of the Samaritan alphabet in the palaeo-Hebrew script, led in the fourth century to the conscientious creation of a related but different alphabet which shows very little change over sixteen centuries after its emergence.

⁵⁴ Above, n. 20.

A	B	C		D	
𐤀	𐤀	𐤀	𐤀	𐤀	א
𐤁	𐤁	𐤁	𐤁	𐤁	ב
𐤂	𐤂	𐤂	𐤂	𐤂	ג
𐤃	𐤃			𐤃	ד
𐤄	𐤄	𐤄	𐤄	𐤄	ה
𐤅		𐤅	𐤅	𐤅	ו
𐤆		𐤆	𐤆	𐤆	ז
𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	𐤇	ח
𐤈		𐤈	𐤈	𐤈	ט
𐤉	𐤉	𐤉	𐤉	𐤉	י
𐤊		𐤊	𐤊	𐤊	כ
𐤋	𐤋	𐤋	𐤋	𐤋	ל
𐤌	𐤌	𐤌	𐤌	𐤌	מ
𐤍	𐤍	𐤍	𐤍	𐤍	נ
𐤎		𐤎	𐤎	𐤎	ס
𐤏	𐤏	𐤏	𐤏	𐤏	ע
𐤐				𐤐	פ
𐤑	𐤑			𐤑	צ
𐤒	𐤒	𐤒	𐤒	𐤒	ק
𐤓		𐤓	𐤓	𐤓	ר
𐤔	𐤔	𐤔	𐤔	𐤔	ש
𐤕	𐤕	𐤕	𐤕	𐤕	ת

Fig. 12.7 The palaeo-Hebrew and Samaritan alphabets: A. Palaeo-Hebrew, eighth to seventh centuries BCE; B. Palaeo-Hebrew on coins of 66–70 CE; C. Palaeo-Hebrew on coins of 132–5 CE; D. Samaritan.

CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of a Samaritan alphabet and a flourishing Samaritan art known from synagogue mosaic pavements, like at El-Khirbe and Kh. Samra, as well as a popular Samaritan art known from pottery lamps in the fourth century CE, are hardly a coincidence. Both Samaritan synagogue art and popular art display a strict observance of the Second Commandment (Exod. 20:4, Deut. 5:8) which is very different from Jewish art of the late Roman and Byzantine periods. It seems that the Samaritans were alarmed by the victories and missionary policies of Christianity. These phenomena are, therefore, to be seen as defensive reactions of a people wishing to preserve their religious and cultural identity. The abandonment of the palaeo-Hebrew script in favour of a Samaritan version of that alphabet may, perhaps, express a wish to move away from antiquated Jewish traditions as well.

One may wonder whether important personages known from Samaritan sources, like Baba Raba and Markah, were involved in this Samaritan renaissance. Such may have been the case but in the absence of any evidence this remains an open question. The two ominous confrontations between the Samaritans and the eastern Roman Empire in the reign of Zenon (474–91 CE), perhaps in 484, and under Justinian in 529 CE, as well as the continuous unrest before and after these two fatal revolts, led the Samaritans down the path from a people to a small community.

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*The Jewish magical tradition from late antique
Palestine to the Cairo Genizah*

Gideon Bohak

Despite some progress in recent decades, the study of Jewish magic is still in its infancy.¹ The few monographs devoted to this subject – most notably the classic treatments of Ludwig Blau and Joshua Trachtenberg – cover only small segments of the Jewish magical tradition, which spans at least from the Second Temple period all the way to the twenty-first century.² And more recent work, including both the publication of numerous Jewish magical texts and some attempts at broader syntheses, has not yet grappled enough with the diachronic aspect of the Jewish magical texts, and with their diffusion and transformation over space and time.³ It is as a contribution to this important yet neglected topic that the following discussion of the Genizah magical texts and their transmission of some late antique Jewish magical recipes should be read. The significance of this contribution does not lie in the novelty of its main argument – that some of the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah are copies of magical texts from late antique Palestine and Egypt – for this point has already been made by others, but in the attempt to provide sound methodological guidelines which could supplement existing scholarly intuitions. It is for this reason that I shall begin with a brief general survey of the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, move on to discussing the methods for distinguishing late antique materials in the Genizah magical texts and illustrating these methods with a concrete example, and end with some reflections on the wider implications of this claim for the study of late antique Jewish magic and its transmission history.

¹ This paper is a part of a larger research project on magical recipes from the Cairo Genizah, which is supported by the Israel Science Foundation.

² Blau 1914; Trachtenberg 1939.

³ For recent publications of Jewish magical texts, see discussion below. For the most comprehensive synthesis of the published Jewish magical texts, see Harari 1998: 136–226.

THE MAGICAL TEXTS FROM THE CAIRO GENIZAH: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The story of the discovery, acquisition, and gradual and on-going publication and study of the Cairo Genizah has often been told, as well as its major impact on the study of many aspects of ancient and medieval Jewish history and culture.⁴ The Genizah magical texts, on the other hand, are mostly absent from the discussions of the Cairo Genizah and from the writings of most Genizah scholars. In spite of the sensation caused by Mordechai Margalioth's 1966 publication of *Sefer ha-Razim*, which itself was the result of his unintended encounter with a Genizah fragment of that book and his subsequent discovery of more such fragments, it was only in the 1980s that several scholars embarked on a systematic search for Genizah magical texts.⁵ To date, their efforts have resulted in a preliminary list of Genizah magical fragments compiled by Shaul Shaked (and kindly put by him at my disposal), and the publication – by teams of scholars in Jerusalem, Berlin and New York – of c. 160 Genizah magical texts, which is just a tiny fraction of the total number of such texts.⁶

When we examine the Genizah magical texts (omitting such occult sciences as alchemy or astrology, and all the more specialised forms of divination), we find magical recipes for numerous aims as well as amulets, curses, erotic spells, angelic adjurations and other 'finished products' manufactured according to such recipes. All these texts are written mainly on paper and vellum (and only rarely on other materials, such as cloth), and mostly in Aramaic, Hebrew, Judaeo-Arabic, Arabic or any mixture thereof (and only rarely in other languages, such as Coptic).⁷ Among the recipes we may note, besides the fragments of more 'literary' books of magic – such as *Sefer ha-Razim*, *Harba de-Moshe* and a few other books which still await identification and reconstruction – the presence within the Genizah of hundreds of fragments and pages of 'free-form' magical recipe books or formularies, which consist of seemingly endless series of magical recipes. These formularies, which often have to be reconstructed from their scattered (and, in some cases, deliberately torn) remains, are bound to keep students of ancient and medieval Jewish magic fruitfully busy for many years to come.⁸ They are, moreover, of exceptional interest

⁴ See now the excellent survey by Reif 2000.

⁵ For Margalioth's discovery of *Sefer ha-Razim*, see his vivid description in Margalioth 1966: ix–xvi.

⁶ For Genizah magical texts, see esp. Naveh and Shaked 1985; Naveh and Shaked 1993; Schiffman and Swartz 1992; Schäfer and Shaked 1994–.

⁷ For general overviews of Genizah magical texts, see Shaked 1983; Shaked 2000; Schäfer 1990; Wasserstrom 1992; Wasserstrom 2005.

⁸ And see now Bohak 2005.

for the present enquiry, for unlike the 'finished products' from the Cairo Genizah, which reflect the actual use of magical practices in medieval Cairo – and such use often tends to 'filter out' incomprehensible or irrelevant archaic elements – the recipe books often preserve more of the older magical recipes. Like every other text found in the Cairo Genizah, these recipes too were copied no earlier than the ninth or tenth century, and in an Arabic-speaking, Muslim world, but in some cases at least they can be shown to be copies of texts which actually do go back to late antique recipes. However, it must be stressed that when we read the Genizah recipe books we should always bear in mind that late antique Jewish magic is only one source of this rich assemblage; some Genizah magical texts can be shown to have been borrowed from the Jews' neighbours in medieval Cairo – especially the Muslims, but occasionally even the Copts – while others can be shown to have been borrowed by the Jews of Byzantium, Ashkenaz or Spain from their Christian neighbours, and then sent along to their brethren in Cairo.⁹ And many other recipes presumably were developed by the Cairene Jews themselves, without any direct ancient or non-Jewish sources. Looking at some of the longer fragments, one often sees a recipe which displays many signs of its late antique origins, followed by one displaying obvious Muslim elements, not to mention those which display no telltale signs of their ultimate origins. Thus, students of late antique Judaism cannot read the Genizah magical texts as direct evidence for late antique Jewish magic, but must rather examine each text, and each recipe, to see whether it really justifies its use as such.

Given these difficulties, why should we bother to look for late antique Jewish magical recipes in the Cairo Genizah? In answering this question, we must note the severe limitations posed by all the other evidence at our disposal for the study of late antique Jewish magic. By far the largest body of late antique Jewish magical texts is provided by the so-called 'demon bowls' or 'incantation bowls' found in seemingly endless quantities in Iraq and western Iran. To date, only *c.* 200 Jewish Aramaic bowls have been published, but the total number of known and soon-to-be-published Jewish Aramaic bowls is far larger.¹⁰ As many of these texts are quite long, this is a substantial body of magical texts, but it is limited exclusively to the Jews of Babylonia, and the more we study it, the more it seems to differ from the magical texts of the late antique Jews

⁹ For some examples of these processes, see Bohak 1999; Leicht 2003; Bohak 2006.

¹⁰ For a list of 152 published Jewish Aramaic bowls, see Sokoloff 2002: 62–6. More recent publications include Levene 2003; Müller-Kessler 2005.

of Palestine and Egypt.¹¹ Thus, one may speak of an 'Eastern' branch of late antique Jewish magic, as practised by the Jews of Babylonia, and of a 'Western' branch, practised by the Jews of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. This 'Western' branch, however, is not so well documented – we have a few dozen amulets written on thin sheets of metal (*lamellae*), less than a handful of curses and erotic spells written on metal *lamellae* or clay and only a few small scraps of Aramaic magical papyri from Egypt.¹² Thus, while the existence and use in late antiquity of Jewish magical recipe books written in Palestinian Jewish Aramaic (and perhaps also in Greek) can be deduced and demonstrated even from these meagre sources, it so happens that these collections of recipes – written on papyrus and vellum – did not survive in the humid climate of Palestine. And so, all we now have as evidence for the 'Western' branch of late antique Jewish magic are a few dozen 'finished products' which happened to be inscribed on more durable writing surfaces, or which were inscribed on less durable surfaces but happen to have been preserved by the dry sands of Egypt. If we can prove that some of the Genizah recipes are copies of the late antique recipes used by the Jews of Palestine and Egypt, we would greatly enhance our ability to study this 'Western' branch of late antique Jewish magic, which for entirely fortuitous reasons happens to be much less documented than the 'Eastern' branch. On the other hand, it must be stressed that with the Genizah texts to assist us, it turns out that while the sources for the study of the 'Eastern' branch of late antique Jewish magic consist almost entirely of one type of 'finished product', the incantation bowls, which also are confined to a relatively narrow timeframe (from the fifth or sixth to the seventh or eighth century CE) and contain texts which often are quite repetitive, those of the 'Western' branch now consist of recipes, amulets, curses and other magical texts, spanning the period from late antiquity to the Middle Ages and providing a mutually informative picture. Thus, unless or until new sources become available, our understanding of the 'Western' branch of Jewish magic is likely to be more multi-faceted and satisfactory than that of the 'Eastern' branch, and this in spite of the initial difficulty in identifying and collecting all the relevant sources. It is for this reason that the quest for late antique materials in the Genizah magical texts becomes so important.

¹¹ For recent surveys of the Babylonian incantation bowls, see Levene 2002; Morony 2003; Shaked 2005; Bohak 2005–6.

¹² For a fuller survey of all these sources see Bohak 2008: 143–226.

EARLY AND LATE IN GENIZAH MAGICAL TEXTS

Like all the texts found in the Cairo Genizah, the magical texts date from the ninth or tenth century to the nineteenth. Thus, using them as evidence in the study of the Jewish magical tradition in late antiquity is quite a risky procedure, and must be carried out in a methodologically sound manner. We must devise criteria for identifying Genizah magical texts as copies of earlier texts, and constantly note the limitations inherent in such a quest. This is especially so because once we admit the continuity into medieval Cairo of the Jewish magical tradition of late antique Palestine and Egypt, it becomes increasingly difficult to decide which magical texts were composed in the early Middle Ages, and which are in fact copies of older compositions. And when we add the constant movement of magical recipes from one Jewish community to another – as can be seen from the presence in the Cairo Genizah of magical recipes whose origins must be traced to Christian Europe and its Jewish residents – the question of early and late becomes ever more complicated.

As noted above, the most natural starting point for our quest is provided by the Genizah recipe books, since magical recipes and formularies tend to be copied from one generation to the next. The best example of this process is the presence within the Cairo Genizah of numerous fragments of *Sefer ha-Razim* ('The Book of the Mysteries'), a book of magical recipes which was certainly written in late antiquity, and probably in Palestine, and then travelled into medieval Cairo and was copied both in its Hebrew version and in a Judaeo-Arabic translation.¹³ The same might be true of the other 'literary' books of magic whose fragments may be found in the Cairo Genizah, but dating these texts is often problematic. The *Harba de-Moshe* ('Sword of Moses'), for example, seems to contain many late antique materials, but the date and place of the final composition of the textual form(s) we currently have are far from clear.¹⁴ But be this as it may, it must be stressed that the number of 'literary' books of magic composed by ancient and medieval Jews was quite small, and certainly much smaller than the number of free-standing recipe books, ranging in size from a single magical recipe scribbled on the margins of some non-magical text to fully-fledged formularies dozens of pages long. When dealing with such collections, however, we must constantly bear in mind their fluid nature; if, for example, we can demonstrate that a single recipe is a copy of a copy

¹³ See Margalioth 1966: 23–8, 53–5. A research team in Berlin, headed by Peter Schäfer, is currently producing a new edition of *Sefer ha-Razim*, based on all the available textual evidence.

¹⁴ See Harari 1997: 52–3.

of a much earlier recipe, this does not prove that the entire collection is that old; recipes can easily be copied from one collection to another, and an old recipe can easily be copied into a much more recent collection.¹⁵ And when we prove that a certain component of a single recipe is much older than the Genizah period, this does not yet demonstrate that the entire recipe in which it is found is ancient, for magical texts often incorporate old materials in new ways. From late antiquity onwards, the Jewish magical tradition is characterised by its scribal nature, with the extensive writing down of both recipes and 'finished products', and the constant copying, editing and reshaping of magical recipes and rituals by their practitioners and transmitters.¹⁶ And, unlike a 'literary' book of magic such as *Sefer ha-Razim*, whose very structure (seven heavens and their subdivisions, the angels in charge of each and the services they can accomplish, etc.) placed some limitations on those who would wish to tamper with it, the magical formularies never were codified, or canonised, or even given any coherent and binding structure; their appearance in every generation depended solely on the whims and needs of the practitioners who copied and used them, and who modified them according to their changing needs.

How, then, can we demonstrate that a given Genizah recipe, or even a part thereof, is ancient? The most convincing method, of course, is to point to a late antique magical text which is so close to a Genizah recipe as to prove the latter's antiquity. In this context, we may recall that Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked convincingly demonstrated how one erotic spell inscribed on clay at Horvat Rimmon, in the north-eastern Negev, in the fifth or sixth century and now only fragmentarily preserved can be reconstructed with the help of a Genizah magical recipe copied half a millennium later. This also proves, as they were quick to note, that the Genizah recipe itself is a copy of a copy of a recipe like the one which served in the preparation of the erotic spell.¹⁷ In my own study of Jewish magical texts, I have now come across several other occurrences of this specific recipe, both in Genizah fragments and in Jewish magical manuscripts of the Middle Ages and the early modern period.¹⁸ Taking another example, we may note how a recipe in one Genizah formulary closely parallels a

¹⁵ This is also evident from the fact that sometimes the same recipe appears in several different formularies, often with minor or major variations. For examples, see, e.g. Bohak 2005.

¹⁶ For some ramifications of this process, see Swartz 1990.

¹⁷ See Naveh and Shaked 1985: Ato with Naveh and Shaked 1993: G22, and further discussion in Naveh 1996: 454–6.

¹⁸ I hope to discuss this example at greater length elsewhere.

recipe in the late antique *Testament of Solomon*, thus demonstrating the antiquity of this specific recipe.¹⁹ Such examples are extremely important, for they prove beyond any doubt that some of the Jewish magical recipes of the Middle Ages indeed go back to much older prototypes which already were in circulation in late antique Palestine. It must be stressed, however, that such examples will necessarily be few and far between, since – as already noted – the total number of Jewish magical texts from late antique Palestine and Egypt remains relatively small, and is certainly dwarfed by the much larger quantity of Genizah magical recipes. Other criteria must therefore be developed for the identification of older elements and units within the Genizah magical texts.

One obvious starting point is the dates of the actual Genizah fragments, which can be established both by means of palaeography and – though more subjectively – by means of their contents, linguistic features and stylistic particularities. Here, the basic rule is that we must focus on the older Genizah magical fragments, since if these preserve late antique recipes, they are likely to do so in a more accurate form than much later copies of the same recipes. It is for this reason that the Genizah magical fragments have such an advantage over the many Jewish magical manuscripts preserved outside the Cairo Genizah, as the latter tend to date only from the fourteenth century onwards, becoming more numerous as the centuries progress. In the Cairo Genizah, on the other hand, magical fragments of the eleventh and twelfth centuries abound, and even earlier magical fragments may occasionally be found. And yet, even the earliest Genizah fragments were written in Muslim times, and so reflect the state of the Jewish magical tradition in the Middle Ages. To use them in reconstructing the Jewish magical practices of late antiquity, we must not only show that they are not based on some Muslim-Arabic magical texts (as is often the case), but also demonstrate that they are likely to be a copy of a copy of a much older Jewish magical text, continuously copied from pre-Islamic times to the Middle Ages. And here, I would like to suggest that in addition to the use of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic (which often is taken as proof of the antiquity of Genizah magical texts), it is the extensive presence of Greek loanwords, of Greek magical signs and especially of Greek or Greco-Egyptian *voces magicae*, which provides us with the best clues for the antiquity of some of the magical recipes in the Cairo Genizah.²⁰

¹⁹ For this example (which I discuss in Bohak 2008: 236–7), cf. Naveh and Shaked 1993: G18, 14/10–12 with *T. Sol.* 18.37, p. 58* McCown.

²⁰ For a related issue, see Bohak 2001.

Let us begin with Greek loanwords. As is well known, late antique Jewish texts, most notably the extensive rabbinic corpus, display a plethora of Greek and (to a lesser extent) Latin loanwords, many of which became part and parcel of the Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic language to this very day. Thus, the presence in the Cairo Genizah magical texts of many Greek loanwords is in itself no sign of their antiquity, for such words commonly appear in rabbinic literature, and therefore were commonly utilised by Jews throughout the Middle Ages and down to our own days. But when we find less common Greek loanwords in the Genizah magical texts, we may be more justified in suggesting that these texts are copies of earlier ones, and that their ultimate origins lie in a period when the Jews' living languages absorbed numerous Greek words. If Jewish recipes from the Cairo Genizah use loanwords like *antidiki* (the Greek word for 'opponents in court'), or *nestikos* (the Greek word for 'on an empty stomach'), or *kefalargia* (the Greek word for 'headache'), or *migrana* (Greek, hemicranion, 'half-the-head (ache)', whence our 'migraine'), this may be because the original recipes in which they are found were written by Jews living in a Greek-speaking environment. It is, of course, not impossible that some of these loanwords were known to medieval Cairene Jews, who embedded them in their own magical creations, but the absence of most of these words from other Genizah texts would argue against such a hypothesis. And it is also possible that such Genizah recipes reflect the Cairene Jews' borrowing of magical recipes from their brethren in the Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire of the Middle Ages, but here the very nature of the transliteration of the Greek loanwords provides us with important clues. In a small number of Genizah magical texts, one can see Greek loanwords transliterated in a manner which reflects the medieval pronunciation of the Greek language, a sure sign that these are not late antique borrowings of Greek magical texts, but ones carried out in the Middle Ages.²¹ In most other cases, however, the transliterations clearly reflect the Greek of late antiquity, in no way different from that reflected by rabbinic literature itself. In such cases, their presence in Genizah magical recipes is a useful indicator of the recipes' antiquity.

Greek loanwords are a good starting point for our study, but a much better starting point is provided by the *voces magicae*, those magic words which are part and parcel of the Greco-Egyptian magic of late antiquity,

²¹ For pertinent examples, see Schäfer and Shaked 1994– vol. I: nos. 7 and 9, both of which display many Greek loanwords transliterated in a manner which displays a medieval (rather than late antique) Greek pronunciation.

as documented by the Greek magical papyri and the Greek *defixiones* and amulets. Leaving aside the complex question of their origins, I wish to focus here on those *voces* which entered the Jewish magical tradition too, and which must have done so at an early date. Such *voces*, and other non-semantic elements borrowed by the Jewish practitioners from their non-Jewish colleagues, provide the best clues for the identification of earlier elements in the Genizah magical texts. In looking for such clues, we must first distinguish between those *voces* which became so common in the Jewish magical texts that they can perhaps be said to have been naturalised in the Jews' magical idiom, and those which appear in the Jewish magical texts only rarely. The name 'Abraxas' or 'Abraxas', for example, became so popular among Jewish magicians from late antiquity onwards, that its appearance in any Genizah magical text tells us nothing certain about this text's antiquity. Such a text could go back to late antiquity, but it is also possible that some medieval Jewish magicians inserted Abraxas in their own recipes, simply because they had seen this name in so many of their own sources. It is for this reason that we must focus on the less common *voces*, and on those that never became naturalised within the Jewish magical tradition; their appearance is a telling sign of the antiquity of the textual units in which they appear. The same is true of some magical signs and designs found in Greek magical texts and then in the Jewish ones – some became naturalised within the Jewish magical tradition, and therefore tell us little about the dates of the recipes in which they appear, but others appear only rarely in Jewish magical texts, and thus disclose the early origins of the textual units in which they are found. Thus, to give just two examples, the ubiquitous appearance in the Jewish magical texts of *characteres* (quasi-alphabetic signs with little ringlets at their tips) or of 'word triangles' (e.g. ABRKS, ABRK, ABRS, etc.), is of little help in dating specific recipes. These Greco-Egyptian magical signs and designs have become fully naturalised in the Jewish magical tradition, and their appearance in a specific recipe is no indication of that recipe's antiquity.²² But when a series of *characteres* found in a medieval Jewish magical text looks just like Greek letters with ringlets, or when a magical triangle turns out to be based on the transliteration of a rare Greek word, then we may be more certain that the element in question is of a Greek, and relatively old, origin. It is precisely the rarity of a certain foreign

²² So popular were these techniques among late antique Jews that even the Babylonian Talmud recommends the use of one 'word triangle' (*bt Pes* 112a; *AZ* 12b); whether the Talmud also refers (in *bt Shab* 103b (with Rashi ad loc.)) to the *characteres* is a vexed question, which cannot be dealt with here.

element derived from the Greek (or Greco-Egyptian) magical tradition within the Genizah magical texts which provides the best clue for the antiquity of the textual units in which it appears.

As a demonstration of how such arguments may be used in analysing the transmission history and original dating of magical recipes from the Cairo Genizah, I have chosen to focus on one specific example, in order to provide a thorough analysis of a single magical recipe. It is found in a Genizah formulary of which only four pages are currently available. Since these are four consecutive pages, it seems clear that this is the central bifolium of a codex, the original size of which cannot as yet be determined, though it is likely to have been a rather thin booklet.²³ The first three pages of this bifolium consist of recipes written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Judaeo-Arabic, while the fourth page contains a recipe written entirely in Arabic and displaying clear Muslim influences. Like most Genizah formularies, in other words, this one too is entirely eclectic, both in terms of the languages and scripts in which it is written and in terms of the ultimate origins of the different recipes it contains. And the handwriting, as Dr Edna Engel kindly informed me, presents a semi-square Oriental script, probably of the twelfth or thirteenth century. Thus, any claim that it contains some late antique materials has to be substantiated in a convincing manner.

Leaving all the other recipes aside, we may focus on a single recipe, found in the second and third pages of this bifolium, and which I translate here in its entirety.²⁴ To preserve a sense of the linguistic make-up (or mix-up) of this recipe I have marked the languages and scripts in which it is written as follows – <A> for Aramaic, for Arabic, <H> for Hebrew, <J> for Judaeo-Arabic and capital letters for 'words' which have no meaning in any language known to me. I have also preserved the general layout of the text, and some of the awkward syntax, but have renumbered the lines, to facilitate subsequent reference to specific elements within this long recipe. I have also added punctuation marks, not found in the original recipe, and commented (in the footnotes) on all the textual and scribal peculiarities presented by this recipe.

1 [... end of previous recipe]. (for) silence(ing).

2 <J> A good <H> subduing, <J> there is none like it. Write it on a thin sheet

²³ The codicology of the Genizah magical recipe books is a fascinating topic, which has so far not received the attention it deserves, and to which I hope to turn at greater length elsewhere.

²⁴ The recipe is Naveh and Shaked 1993: G9, p. 2, line 16–p. 3, line 19, and I have used, and modified, the editors' reading and translation, and the excellent photograph provided in Plate 34; for an earlier discussion of this recipe, see Naveh 1985: 376–7.

3 of lead, and place it under your foot and say,
 4 <A>²⁵ Just as God subdued the world under
 5 his hand, and the threshold of the earth under
 6 the heaven, so will be subdued before me all those who speak
 7 evil against me, and all²⁶ my legal opponents,²⁷ ZZZBZZ,²⁸
 8 and will be subdued before me in the name of these names of
 9 excommunication:²⁹ KWYR BKWYR BQH KWR BNYKWYR
 10 BNYKWYR; these are names which sit upon the winds (or, spirits)
 11 and subdue them so that they would not come out and shake the world,
 12 so shall be subdued all those who speak evil about me, I,
 13 ZZZBZZ,³⁰ and be subdued before me, in the name of
 14 Kavshiel, Kavshiel, Kavshiel, who subdued the world
 15 under his feet, so will be subdued before me
 16 those who speak evil of me. And these *chalacire*³¹ (on parchment)
 17 *characteres*³² write on parchment (Write these *qalafirat*)³³
 18 [magic signs]
 19 [magic signs]
 20 <J> And take three pebbles and put them on the written text
 21 and tie them to it, and throw it into the great
 22 sea. God willing. <A> By your name, the living and the existent.
 23 [magic signs]
 24 [magic signs]

This recipe is quite long and complex, and is written in a mixture of languages. The ritual instructions are written in Judaeo-Arabic, except for one technical term, 'subduing', which appears in its Hebrew form

²⁵ In the Aramaic spell which follows, the scribe has meticulously vocalised almost every word, in spite of the great effort this must have entailed.

²⁶ As the editors note, the original word was וכל, 'and all', but the *kaf* was inadvertently dropped out.

²⁷ As noted by Naveh 1985: 377, אנטדיקי is a Greek loanword, ἀντιδικοί (nom. pl.), 'opponents in court'.

²⁸ Here and again below, our scribe (or an earlier copyist) missed the meaning of the common abbreviation פ ב פ, (i.e. 'so-and-son of so-and-so', which scholars usually transcribe as NN) and copied it as זוזוז. Naveh 1985: 377, adduces a parallel, זוזוז, in T.-S. K1.162, now published as Schäfer and Shaked 1994 vol. III: no. 61 (tb/9), but the origins of this strange error remain elusive.

²⁹ I am not sure about the meaning of שמיתא, but assume it is best translated as שמתא; Naveh and Shaked 1993: 150 took it for a dittography ('in the name of these names of names'), and left it out of their English translation.

³⁰ See above, n. 28.

³¹ The scribe began to write בלקטיריה, but soon realised that he had forgotten the letter *teth*, so he crossed out the entire word and wrote it in the next line.

³² בלקטיריה, a common transliteration of the Greek technical term χαρακτῆρες, which usually appears in Jewish magical texts with an Aramaic plural ending, i.e. כלקטיריא or קטיריא.

³³ The instructions written in Aramaic were repeated in Arabic, first in the margin of line 17, and then, when the scribe ran out of space, in the margin of line 16. The common Arabic transliteration of the Greek word χαρακτῆρες is *qalafirat*, and this is the likely reading here, but the absence of diacritical points allows for other readings too.

(line 2), and one instruction (lines 16–17) which is written in Aramaic. The recipe also displays an extra title, or heading (line 1) in Arabic, and an Arabic gloss (lines 16–17) which repeats what was already written in the Aramaic text. The spell to be uttered, however, is written in Aramaic, and is even meticulously vocalised, except for the *vores magicae* and angel names, which receive no vocalisation. The spell also provides four lines of *characteres*, two of which (lines 18–19) are to be written on a piece of parchment, and two (lines 23–4) whose function is not entirely clear.

In looking at this text, we may first note the poor quality of the copying, and the ignorance displayed by our copyist, or those that came before him (see esp. the notes to lines 7 and 13, and the general ambiguity at the end of the recipe). This is one telling clue that our recipe is not a *de novo* composition, but a copy of an older text, and that at least one copyist in this recipe's transmission history was quite careless or ignorant when it came to copying his source. This, we may add, is an extremely common occurrence among Jewish (and non-Jewish) magicians of all ages, in marked contrast with the common scholarly assumption that magicians tend to copy and pronounce their spells with extreme care, for fear lest any error might render them ineffective. Reading actual recipe books and 'finished products', one often sees that this was not the case, and that the careful copyists were often outnumbered by the careless ones.

But how old is this recipe? As signs of its antiquity, we may note the good Aramaic in which the spell itself is written, certainly an argument for its pre-Islamic origins. In fact, what we see here is a phenomenon that can be traced in many other Genizah recipes, and in non-magical Genizah texts as well, namely, the gradual translation of older texts from Aramaic and Hebrew into Judaeo-Arabic, at a time when Aramaic was being replaced by Arabic as the main spoken language of the Jews of the lands of Islam.³⁴ Thus, even without any further evidence, one would suggest that the recipe in question was originally written entirely in Aramaic, and that a later copyist decided to leave the spell itself in Aramaic, for fear lest a translation should destroy its magical efficacy, but translated all the surrounding instructions into the vernacular of his own day, namely Arabic.³⁵ He did not realise, however, that he forgot to

³⁴ For this process, see also Leicht 2005.

³⁵ Such processes are extremely common in different magical traditions characterised by the continuous transmission of written magical texts; see, for example, Dieleman 2005: 126 (instructions in Demotic, spell in Greek), or Versnel 2002: 137, n. 80 (instructions in the vernacular, spell in Latin).

translate the Aramaic instructions in lines 16 and 17. He, or a later copyist, also added an Arabic title to the spell, for the sake of easily finding it in his formulary, and the most recent copyist added an explanation in Arabic of a few words of the instructions which had been left in the original Aramaic (lines 17 and 16). For all these processes numerous parallels could be adduced from other Genizah magical texts, which often display telltale signs of being copies of much earlier recipes, and of such processes as the gradual translation of the Aramaic sections into Judaeo-Arabic, the addition of extra titles and other mechanisms for finding one's way in one's own formulary, and the insertion of interpretive glosses to facilitate the understanding of potentially difficult passages. When tracing back these processes, however, we must always bear in mind that while their presence makes the antiquity of such recipes seem quite plausible, it does not suffice to prove it. Recurrent copying could have occurred within a short period of time – if, for example, one magician passed on his formulary, or single recipes, to a colleague, who passed them on to others, and so on – and does not necessarily demonstrate a text's antiquity, only its wide circulation and use.

In looking for further evidence of this recipe's antiquity, we may note the following elements. First, one patent feature of this spell is the numerous similarities to and parallels with other Jewish magical texts, some of which are of a late antique date. These have been pointed out by Joseph Naveh, who noted, for example, that the term *kibbush*, 'subduing', found in line 2 is extremely common in aggressive Jewish magical texts, not only those found in the Cairo Genizah, but also those found among the incantation bowls from late antique Babylonia and one Palestinian Jewish aggressive magical text. Naveh also noted that the angel Kavshiel, who is here identified as the one in charge of such actions (and as his name, derived from the same root, כבש, so eloquently testifies), appears not only in our text, but also in one of the Babylonian bowls.³⁶ Second, in line 7 we find the spell requesting that 'all my *antidiki* will be subdued before me'. *Antidiki* is, as Naveh pointed out, a loanword from Greek, which in this case is used in the nominative plural form, with the final -oi iotacised into an -i sound; both phenomena are extremely common in the Greek loanwords found in rabbinic literature, and the structure of the sentence clearly demonstrates that whoever composed it knew exactly what the word meant. One of the later copyists, however, was probably ignorant of the meaning of this word, which would explain the

³⁶ See Naveh 1985: 369–70.

two copying errors in a single line (see the notes ad loc.) – a line that probably was incomprehensible to the text's final owners. Third, in lines 16–17 the Aramaic text instructs its users to write *characteres* (כלקטיריה). This is, of course, a common technical term in the Greek magical texts of late antiquity, usually referring to the 'ring letters' which appear on thousands of magical texts, in numerous languages, from late antiquity onwards. And when we examine the *characteres* themselves (lines 18–19 and 23–4), we note that the first line could easily be interpreted as consisting of Arabic letters, but in the other three, and especially in the last line, the *characteres* seem to consist of Greek-looking letters with ringlets at their ends, yet another argument for the recipe's pre-Islamic origins. Similarly, and this is the fourth point, the claim at the spell's very beginning (line 2) that it is 'a good subduing, there is none like it', is amply paralleled in the Greek magical papyri, where such boasts and 'advertisements' are often placed at precisely that point in the recipe – right after the title which heads it and explains its aim.³⁷ In later Jewish magical recipes, such claims tend to become much more stereotyped and formulaic, often consisting merely of the claim that a given recipe is 'tried and tested' (בדוק ומנוסה). Finally, we may note how in lines 2–3 the Judaeo-Arabic instructions enjoin writing the magical spell on a lead *lamella*. As is well known, the writing of curses and aggressive spells on lead *lamellae* is a typically Greek magical practice, known in Greek as a *katadesmos* and in Latin as a *defixio*. The fact that here too an aggressive spell, to subdue and silence an opponent, must be written on lead, and not on any other writing surface, and that the ritual described here – trampling the lead tablet under one's feet – is closely paralleled in the instructions for many Greek *defixiones*,³⁸ certainly argues for the recipe's late antique origins, even if it does not suffice to prove it.

In summarising all the above points, we may note that we find within this recipe a series of features which point to its antiquity. But the most telling bit of evidence is found in lines 9–10, where we find a series of magic words, KWYR BKWYR BQH KWR BNYKWYR BNYKWYR. At first sight, this might seem like mere gibberish, a not uncommon occurrence in Jewish and non-Jewish magical texts of all periods. This specific sequence, however, is not a Jewish magician's playful invention or the

³⁷ For a recent analysis of this scribal habit, see Dieleman 2005: 254–84.

³⁸ As one illustrative example, note the recipe in *PGM* X 36–50, where a *defixio* for subduing one's opponent is written on a metal *lamella*, placed in one's sandal, and trampled upon as part of the magical ritual. As the spell includes the *chych bachych* formula (on which more below), the similarity is even more striking.

result of some glossolalic mystical ecstasy, but a magical *logos* well attested in the Greek magical texts (magical papyri, *defixiones* and magical gems), where it usually runs $\chi\upsilon\chi\ \beta\alpha\chi\upsilon\chi\ \beta\alpha\kappa\alpha\chi\upsilon\chi\ \beta\alpha\kappa\alpha\chi\iota\chi\upsilon\chi\ \beta\alpha\zeta\alpha\beta\alpha\chi\upsilon\chi$, with some variation.³⁹ Comparing the Hebrew spelling found in this text and the ones found in Greek magical texts which predate it by more than half a millennium, we may note that it is absolutely clear that this is the same formula, for no accidental conglomeration of letters and syllables would result in such a close proximity, but it is equally clear that the formula was slightly garbled in the process of textual transmission. In the original transliteration of this Greek *logos*, it must have looked like *KWYK BKWYK BQKWYK BZYKWYK, but later copyists, entirely unfamiliar with this strange formula, miscopied the final *kaph* (ך) of all these 'words' as a *resh* (ר), split the 'word' *bakakhukh* in two, and garbled and duplicated the last 'word'. What is more important, the process clearly involved a direct transliteration of this formula from Greek into Hebrew letters and the subsequent miscopying of the Hebrew sequence. Had this *logos* passed to the Jewish magicians through Arabic textual intermediaries, the end result would have been very different (e.g. confusions of B, N, Y, T, Th and other letters which are orthographically similar in the Arabic alphabet, and are virtually identical in texts which make use of no diacritical points). And the move of the Greek *logos* into the Jewish magical text must have taken place at an early date, since the *chych bachych* formula hardly would have been known to Middle Byzantine magicians or to the Jews who borrowed their recipes.

To sum up: what we have seen here is one recipe, which is preserved only in the Cairo Genizah, and for which no late antique 'finished products' based upon its textual forefathers can at this stage be adduced.⁴⁰ And yet, close examination of this recipe shows it to be a distant copy of a late antique text, and the strongest evidence is provided by the *voces magicae* it uses; such *voces* may be semantically meaningless, but they can be very meaningful for the detection of different historical layers within our magical texts. Thus, we can use the different arguments adduced here to get a sense of the long and complex transmission history of a single

³⁹ For this magical *logos*, see, for example, Brashear 1995: 3582.

⁴⁰ This absence, we may add, is hardly surprising, since the recipe enjoins producing two 'finished products', the second of which is to be dumped in the sea, while the fate of the first (after it has been trampled upon by the practitioner) is not really clear. If it too were dumped in the sea, nothing would survive for future generations to discover as evidence for the actual use of this recipe.

recipe from late antique Palestine or Egypt to the Cairo Genizah. To be sure, this is not an exact science, and I do not claim here that we can reconstruct the original recipe, or any particular stage in its transmission history, with absolute certainty. I do claim, however, that by collecting more such examples we would acquire a new body of sources for the study of late antique Jewish magic, greatly increasing our ability to complement the picture which emerges from the other sources pertaining to the study of the 'Western' branch of late antique Jewish magic.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE JEWISH MAGICAL TRADITION
FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE CAIRO GENIZAH

Having examined one Genizah magical recipe which can be shown to be a distant copy of a late antique Jewish magical text, we may now note some of the wider implications of such analyses. The fact that the Cairo Genizah often preserves older texts, some of which have not been preserved elsewhere, is hardly surprising. It has produced only a few Jewish texts of the Second Temple period, such as the Damascus Covenant or the Hebrew Ben Sira, but the late antique Jewish texts (such as prayers, *piyyutim* and even secular poetry) in Palestinian Aramaic preserved there number in the hundreds, and perhaps even the thousands.⁴¹ In some of these texts, we can even trace processes similar to the ones we saw with the magical texts, such as the gradual translation of older texts from Aramaic into Judaeo-Arabic or the adaptation of old texts to new social needs. And yet, while such similarities are worth pursuing, they also highlight some of the differences between the different bodies of late antique Palestinian Jewish Aramaic texts preserved in the Genizah. Of all these texts, the magical recipes certainly were the most fluid from a textual perspective, in terms both of whole recipes being moved from old textual units and embedded in new ones, and of actual changes within the recipes themselves, far beyond the mere translation of the archaic Aramaic instructions into the Arabic vernacular. *Sefer ha-Razim* had a clear literary structure, and underwent at least some form of textual stabilisation; the structureless formularies, on the other hand, were copied not as literary texts but as heaps of raw materials, adapted in the process of adoption. Some of these changes were due to the obscurity of elements within these recipes which were entirely meaningless to the practitioners and copyists of Genizah times (and rare Greek loanwords or *voces magicae* often were the first to suffer), and to

⁴¹ See, for example, Yahalom 1999: 173–83.

the sheer ignorance and carelessness of these copyists. Other changes, however, were due to deliberate alterations and modifications of recipes which were constantly being not only copied, but also used, while recipes which were no longer deemed useful (for example, those for winning in the chariot races) were left uncopied, and gradually vanished from our records. Thus, whereas the Genizah copies of older liturgical texts provide us with fairly direct access to the late antique appearance of these texts, the search for the late antique predecessors of the Genizah magical texts goes against the grain of any active magical tradition, which constantly reshapes and recasts its materials. And yet the number of Genizah magical recipes and texts which can be shown to go back to late antique prototypes is quite large, and these texts greatly augment our knowledge of late antique Jewish magical praxis, and of the cross-cultural contacts between Jews, Greeks and Egyptians, or, to frame it in religious terms, between Jews, 'pagans' and Christians, in the last pre-Islamic centuries. They also tell us much about the transmission of pre-Islamic Jewish knowledge to the Jews of the lands of Islam, and how old bodies of written texts were transformed by the new linguistic and social realities. It is for these reasons that they deserve more of our attention.

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Greek into Arabic

*The Nabataean connection of the Benei Ḥezir**Ernst Axel Knauf*

In his recent discussion of the tomb and *nefesh* of the Benei Ḥezir at Jerusalem, D. Barag described and identified palpable Nabataean elements in the architecture and decorations of this monument from first-century BCE Jerusalem.¹ As evidenced by a scatter of finds, 'Nabataeanising' was fashionable among at least some Judaeans families.² Jewish–Nabataean contacts in the first centuries BCE/CE operated on the levels of politics, trade, and settlement, and are inscribed within the larger context of Judaeans/Jewish presence in Transjordan and North Arabia from Achaemenid times to the coming of Islam.

Political relations between the Jewish and Nabataean principalities might briefly be summarised, although for a rich family like the Benei Ḥezir (whose wealth, based on trade and land leasing, is evidenced by the splendour of their tomb) they were largely irrelevant. As the biblical book of Ruth demonstrates so well, there had always been emigration from Judah to Moab, and immigration from Moab to Judah. Most scholars date Ruth to the fifth century BCE, but the basic situation of the protagonists is timeless and applies to the whole 'pre-modern world' from the beginnings of settled life to the end of the Ottoman period. The Moabite plateau is 200 m higher than the mountains of Judah, thus receiving more precipitation than any area south of Hebron, and becomes an area of refuge in times of drought. It is, from the point of view of the geography of traffic, fairly isolated and less accessible from the north, west and south, and becomes an area of refuge in times of crisis and instability, especially if the aggressors come from the north, west or south. By the same token, it is less attractive whenever people find a living nearer to the coast.³ Prosopographical evidence for a Jewish presence in Transjordan is restricted to the north (Gilead and Ammon) in the Persian

¹ Barag 2003: 89–92.

² Cf. Hachlili and Killebrew 1999; cf. for the pseudo-Nabataean ware from Jerusalem, Wenning 1987: 136.

³ Cf. Knauf 1992: 47–54.

period.⁴ A namesake if not a descendant of Nehemiah's Tobiyah tried to turn his large estate, sheltered in one of the wadis leading from the Ammonite plateau to the Jordan Valley, into a principality around 200 BCE, fighting the neighbouring Arabs (among them, supposedly, Nabataeans), but also indulging in rock architecture (which was first – Wadi es-Sîr or Petra?).⁵ But in spite of beginnings like these (and of Gen. 16:12), Jewish–Nabataean relations made a story of war and peace, not just of war. The Nabataean shaykh Aretas I, according to some, the author of the second-century Elusa/Khalutzah inscription,⁶ sheltered the deposed High Priest Jason, fleeing to Egypt (2 Macc. 5:8). Nabataeans cooperated with Judas Maccabee and his brother Jonathan, both in the vicinity of Bostra and in Moab (1 Macc. 5:24–7; 9:35; 2 Macc. 12:10–12), while the Banu 'Amr of Madeba, in the first and second centuries CE a Nabataean tribe, but evidently not yet (or not fully) so in the second century BCE, killed Jonathan's brother Johanan (1 Macc. 9:36–42).⁷ Jews and Nabataeans were neighbours, so they were allies when they had enemies in common, and enemies if not. Alexander Jannai fought Obodas I, Rabb'el I and Aretas III with changing fortune. Parts of western and northern Moab changed hands several times. On the other hand, Rabb'el restored Jewish independence, lost by Alexander to Antiochus XII in 87 BCE, when he defeated and killed the last Seleucid of any import at Motho (Mu'tah in Moab, or Imtân in the Hauran) in 86, losing his own life in the victory. In 65/64, Rabb'el's successor, Aretas III, sided with Hyrcanus II against Aristobulus II. Herod fought the Nabataeans in 37–31 and 12–9 BCE. Herod's second Nabataean war was fought because of Nabataean patronage of the 'robbers and brigands' of Trachonitis. In between, 500 archers supplied by Herod fought side by side with 1,000 Nabataean cameliers on Aelius Gallus' disastrous expedition in Yemen in 24 BCE. Herod's son Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, married a Nabataean princess, whom he divorced in 32 CE. Her father, Aretas IV, declared war and concluded it victoriously in 36. Rome threatened retaliation, but dropped the threats

⁴ Ostrakon 7 from Tell el-Mazar (in the Jordan valley, a little north of the Jabbok), fifth century. BCE contains at least one Jewish name (Jehoyada'); cf. Ahituv 1992: 235–6; Knauf 1999. More or less contemporary is the Ammonite minister ('eved) with the Jewish name Tobiyah, mentioned by Nehemiah (Neh. 2:10–19; 4:3–7; 6:1–19; 13:4–8).

⁵ Jos. *AJ* 12.222; 12.228–34.

⁶ According to Cross 1955; this author, with Cantineau 1932: 43–4, and Wenning 1987: 141, favours the attribution of this text to Aretas II.

⁷ Knauf 1994.

when Tiberius died. In 67, it was the Nabataeans' turn to join the Roman army against the Jews, with 1,000 cavalry and 500 archers.⁸

The ups and downs of Jewish–Nabataean political relations during that period had no impact whatsoever on the Jews living under Nabataean rule, nor on Nabataeans (or other Arabs who wrote Aramaic and Greek) living under Jewish rule. At Seeia (es-Sī'), 'Ubaishat bin Sa'ad (OBAICATOC CAOΔOY, in Greek letters) dedicated a statue to Herod the Great, who ruled that place from 24–23 BCE.⁹ A thriving population bearing Arab personal names left a Nabataean inscription there in the year 33 of Herod's son Philippos (29/30 CE).¹⁰

The first surviving voice from the Jewish diaspora in Arabia is recorded in Ps. 120:5 (from the late Persian/early Hellenistic period) 'Woe is me, that I am an alien in Meshech, that I must live among the tents of Kedar' (NRSV). At least by the time of Aretas IV (9 BCE to 39/40 CE), there were Jewish trading colonies at Petra and Hegra; a Jewish citizen of Nabataean Hegra inscribed his tomb in 42/3 CE.¹¹ At Jubbah, between Duma/el-Jōf and Ḥāyil, a traveller from the Roman or early Byzantine periods left a graffito in Hebrew: מְבָרֵךְ הַשֵּׁם אֲדָנִי '(I am) blessing the name of the Lord...'.¹² Babatha's family owned property on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, but also on the Moabite plateau south of the Arnon, until the Roman counter attack against Bar Kosiba (in which the governor of Provincia Arabia took part) expelled them.¹³ Jewish settlement in Moab was driven by economic forces, not politics. Long-distance trade (which directed Jews to Petra and Hegra) might yield huge profits, but landed property (and large-scale agriculture, or agro-business) was the only way to invest capital safely. Both the topography of Judah and biblical property laws (cf. Lev. 25) were not conducive to the acquisition and maintenance of large estates. If Jewish families wanted to invest in large-scale landlordism, they had to go elsewhere: Idumaea, Galilee – or Moab; and priestly families were not immune against economic interests in Transjordan (cf. already Neh. 13:4–9).

⁸ Bowersock *Arabia*; Kasher 1988.

⁹ Hackl, Jenni and Schneider *Quellen*: 173, no. E.004.03.

¹⁰ *PAES* 101; Hackl, Jenni and Schneider *Quellen*: 178, no. E.004.06.

¹¹ *CIS* II 218 l.2 (42/3 CE); Healey *Tomb Inscriptions*: 97; Knauf 1998. Hegra and Tayma had Jewish rulers in the fourth and fifth centuries, cf. Altheim and Stiehl 1968: 305–9.

¹² Second line illegible, probably ending with [שְׁלוֹם]; Euting 1896: 152; contemporary Arabian Jews usually preferred Nabataean Aramaic, thus Yahya ben Simon at Dedan (307 CE); Jaussen and Savignac 1914: no. 386, or Adnan ben Hannai ben Samuel at Hegra in 355/6 CE. Akrabos ben Samuel, from Maqna, who left a Nabataean graffito near Elat (Keel and Küchler 1982: 288; Wenning 1987: 192, no. 2), wrote more likely in the second–third rather than in the first centuries.

¹³ Cotton 1999; Knauf 2003.

That the Ḥezir family was wealthy and influential is attested by the lavishness of their tomb and its location. The influence of Nabataean architecture can be read as an indication that the Benei Ḥezir owed their wealth partly to Arabian trade – and/or estates near or within regions under Nabataean rule. One might even venture to suggest the location of one of these: Khanzîreh in Moab, on the south-western spur of the Moabite plateau, overlooking both the southern shore of the Dead Sea and the Wadi l-Ḥesā, the Edomite border.¹⁴

A place name etymologically derived from an animal is usually regarded as a piece of palaeo-zoological evidence, and wild boars (Arabic *ḥinzir*, pl. *ḥanazir*,) did roam that part of the Moabite plateau as late as the early twentieth century.¹⁵ There is, however, the possibility that a foreign name was re-etymologised in Arabic, as in the fairly well-known case of Tell Abū l-Bûm, ‘The tell of the Father of the Owl’, which enriched Palestinian toponymy in the early twentieth century, and not as a reminiscence of Isa. 34:II; 34:15; Zeph. 2:14, but in deference to the owner of that special piece of land, Jacob Applebaum. The toponym contains two traits which encourage one to pursue the Benei Ḥezir connection:

- I. ‘Pig-related’ toponyms are fairly ubiquitous in the Arab world, but with few exceptions they follow the plural, not the singular form of the noun. There is just one more Khanzîrah known, in Lebanon.¹⁶ For Khanâzîr (or its diminutive, Khunaizîr), we have
 - in Palestine: Khunaizir near Bet-Shean and Khirbet el-Khanâzîr west of Jerusalem;¹⁷
 - in Jordan: Umm el-Khanâzîr, airport (31° 1′ N./35° 67′ E); Khanâzîr, southern Ghor, 7 km south of Feifa, near the mouth of Wadi Khanâzîr;
 - in Syria: Khunaizîreh near Damascus;¹⁸ Khanâzîr on the Orontes (35° N./38° E.); Khanâzîr near the Euphrates (36° 2′ 60″ N./35° 48′ 60″ E.); al-Khanâzîr (35° 15′ 0″ N./36° 31′ 0″ E.);

¹⁴ Cf. for the place and its environs: Musil 1907: 22; 72; 360; for the road connections: Musil 1907: 72; 257–9; for its agricultural potential: Musil 1907: 257–9 and Rawaq and Shemida 2002: 142; for the archaeological evidence: Miller 1991: 148–9, site no. 401. Hellenistic pottery from the site (three sherds) surpasses the Iron Age (two), early Roman (one) and late Ottoman periods, (two), is equal to the early Byzantine period (three) and only inferior to the Nabataean (four), Byzantine (four), Ayyubid-Mamluke (twenty), late Islamic (ninety-one) and Modern (nine) periods.

¹⁵ Cf. Musil 1908: 18: ‘In den Eichenwäldern, der ganzen ‘Araba und in mehreren Gebieten des Hochlandes kommt das Wildschwein, ḥalûf, ziemlich häufig vor.’ Alternatively, the shape of a geographic feature resembles a specific animal; this seems to be the case with the (Jabal) Khinzîr mentioned by Yâqût [n.d.]: II, 393.

¹⁶ www.geonames.org/6271860/el-khanzire.html.

¹⁷ Khalidi 1992: 54, 278.

¹⁸ Dussaud 1927: 305.

- in Iraq: Abu Khanâzîr (33° 53' 8" N./44° 45' 37" E.); Tell Umm al-Khanâzîr (32° 40' 16" N./45° 9' 8" E.).¹⁹

As for Khanzîrahs, there seem to exist but two, one of them our Moabite candidate for the estate of the Benei Ḥezir (whose recently established 'decent' name, aṭ-Ṭayyibeh 'The Good One', does not seem to stick).²⁰

2. *-ah* is, in Canaanite (and Aramaic) place names, a locative formative²¹ which also operates on the basis of personal names: Yid'alāh, Josh. 19:15 from *Yeda'el (in analogy of Yedayah 1 Chr. 4:37; Neh. 3:10). In Lebanese toponyms, this *-ah* became *-l*: 'Abdillī<'Abdel(l)ah, from Abdiël;²² Khaldi<Khaldah, from Heled (1 Chr. 11:30) or even Khâled; and perhaps (Nabi) Smaili<*(I)sma(ʿ/ʾ)ilah, from Ishmael/Isma'il.²³ The relative scarcity of Khanzîrah as opposed to Khanâzîr etc. might argue in favour of this derivation.

That Khanzîrah was in fact the location of an estate of the Benei Ḥezir does not form a case that could be argued in court, but a promising avenue for further investigation. Within the cultural context of Jewish settlement in Nabataean Moab in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, the tomb and inscription of the Benei Ḥezir at Jerusalem start to tell a story:

זה קבר והנפש של אלעזר חניה יועזר יהודה שמעוך יוחנן
בני יוסף בן עובד יוסף ואלעזר בני חניה
כהנים מבני חזיר

This is the tomb and the funerary monument of El'azar, Honyoh, Jo'ezer, Jehudah, Shim'on, Johanan, the sons of Joseph ben 'Obed Joseph and of El'azar, the sons of Honyoh, priests of the Benei Ḥezir.

¹⁹ A Google search for Khanazir/Khanazira/Khanazire/Khanazirah/Khanazireh 8 August 2007 produced 1,300 results; entries listed above without further references are drawn from the first 20 hits (hence the irregularities in the form of the coordinates, which were copied as found).

²⁰ An internet search (10 July 2007) for Khanzireh/Khanzirah/Khanzira/Khanzire immediately hit this and the Lebanese Khanzirah, and nothing else. Incidentally, the second Khanzirah is also located in an area where the Canaanite proper name ḫnzr/ḫzr can be encountered; cf. Gröndahl 1967: 388.

²¹ Borée 1968: 41–3.

²² Wild 1973: 165 regards it as a variant form of 'Abdalla (thus a place name from a personal name without a formative); in the toponymic corpus, though, original *-ah* (as in 'Abdullāh) becomes *-a*; *-i* leads to *'Abd'il+*ah*, with only the gemination of the *-l-* caused by the analogy of the frequent Muslim name.

²³ If the last name is reduced from *Smâyil<Smâ'il in analogy to Isrâyl (Wild 1973: 213). Cf. for the whole group Wild 1973: 165–76, who forgot on p. 165 to mention the locative *-ah*.

Austere as it is,²⁴ it documents the entrepreneurial success of six grandsons of the Hezirite priest Honyoh; numerous as they were, they had to be successful in business. Incidentally, this is also one of the very few texts in pre-Mishnaic Middle Hebrew – together with Nabataean Old Arabic the most neglected spoken language in the whole period from Cyrus to Hadrian.

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²⁴ But cf. for the *qever wa-nefesh* formula also the Nabataean inscription from Madeba *CIS* II 196 (Healey *Tomb Inscriptions*: 247–8), line 1 דא מקברתא ותרתי נפשתא) 'These are the tomb and the two funeral monuments...'; *BAGN* II 88 [פ]ש[אויק]ברתא) דנה after Hofstijzer and Jongeling *North-West Semitic*: II 748).

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*Greek inscriptions in transition from the
Byzantine to the early Islamic period*

Leah Di Segni

The aim of this paper is to examine the epigraphic use of Greek in the last period of Byzantine rule and in the early Islamic period in the region nowadays divided among the State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and Syria, once a patchwork of provinces and parts of provinces of the Byzantine Empire: the three Palaestinae, Arabia and southern Phoenice. This region shared a common cultural and political history in the period indicated, albeit with some chronological variations in its development. I shall endeavour, first, to follow the career of Greek as the main vehicle of expression in epigraphic form, and second, to trace changes in its usage, and in the language itself, if any can be discovered.

The peak of Greek inscriptions in this region, throughout the period of currency of this tongue, was in the sixth and the early seventh centuries. By the end of the eighth century, Greek as an epigraphic medium had ceased to be relevant, though it was still occasionally used in the ecclesiastical milieu, especially in Jerusalem.¹ Ostensibly, what brought about the decline is clear – the impact of the Islamic conquest and the formation of a dominant culture supported by an Arabic-speaking Muslim elite that superseded the former Greek-speaking Christian leading class. Not surprisingly, Greek did not go down without a fight. It survived in private use – namely, in epitaphs – until the eighties of the seventh century (in isolated cases even later, including early medieval occurrences in Jerusalem), and in public inscriptions until the late eighth century (and in Jerusalem and its vicinity even as late as the Crusader period). Thus the decline would seem to be accounted for as the result of a political change that in due course brought about a corresponding cultural change. However, when we endeavour to define the transition from dominant

¹ The chronology of the decline of Greek as the dominant language of culture, in the sense of scholarship, is quite different, as has been shown by Mango 1991: 149–60. Cf. Blake 1963: 367–80; Griffith 1997: 11–16.

language – at least in the epigraphic form² – to a language in decline chronologically, we begin to wonder whether the Islamic conquest really marked the beginning of this process.

First, let us review language use in this region in late antiquity. What options were open to the local inhabitants in those days when they wanted to leave written testimony of themselves, their beloved ones, their deeds or ideology? I leave aside the question of Arabic speakers – who they were and whether they were settled in the country at the beginning of this period; in any case, by the fourth century, written Nabataean and Safaitic were disappearing,³ and the first Arabic inscriptions in the early Arabic script, while they did appear in the sixth century, were still far from numerous even in the seventh.⁴ For speakers of the various Western Aramaic dialects, there was the option of the old Hebrew script, used by Samaritans and in some cases also by Jews still in the fourth century,⁵ and of the Aramaic script, which we encounter in synagogue inscriptions and in Jewish epitaphs. Christians could have recourse to the Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA) script, at least from the early fifth century. However, Samaritan inscriptions in this period are few, and the inscriptions uncovered in excavations of Samaritan synagogues and holy places are mostly in Greek.⁶ Admittedly, in Jewish synagogue inscriptions the

² I leave aside the thorny question whether Greek was the dominant *spoken* language in the region. The fact that it was the most favoured medium of self-expression in inscriptions (see below) attests to its status, not its predominance. It would seem reasonable to surmise that Greek was the vehicular language of the land, since all communication with the authorities, as well as all interchange between the various linguistic groups living in the country, was of necessity carried on through it, but there are enough hints in the literary sources to indicate that a large portion of the population even in the cities – not to speak of the countryside – did not speak or understand Greek: see for instance *Itinerarium Egeriae* 47, 3–4 in Franceschini and Weber 1965: 89; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 18, in Schwartz 1939: 28–9.

³ Contini 1987 [1990]: 32, 36, 52. Latin is another language and script that disappeared from the region in the course of the fourth century (in the Hauran, between 270 and 370, according to Sartre, *IGLS* XXX, 1: 35; and cf. Contini 1987 [1990]: 39); therefore the option of Latin is not discussed here. For a survey of the languages spoken in the eastern provinces in the late Roman period, see also Schmitt 1983: esp. 575–6 (Palaestina), 576–8 (Arabia).

⁴ The earliest Arabic inscriptions (apart from a few worded in Arabic but written in other scripts) appear at Zebed near Aleppo (512 CE), Jebel Usays near Damascus (528) and in the church of St George at Khirbat Mukhayyet (c. 535: the last was mistakenly described as Aramaic by Milik 1959–60: 159–60, and in later editions, including my own in Piccirillo and Alliata 1998: 442, no. 41. I am grateful to Robert Hoyland for pointing out the mistake to me). Two undated examples, from Jebel Ramm (east of 'Aqaba) and Umm el-Jimal, were tentatively ascribed to the fourth and fifth century respectively: Contini 1987 [1990]: 39–41.

⁵ As is attested by Epiphanius, *De gemmis*, PG 43, cols. 357–8, and by Jewish sources: Safrai 1977: 86–7.

⁶ Inscriptions ascribable to the Samaritan inhabitants of the region in the late Roman and Byzantine periods, some in Samaritan, most in Greek, were discovered at Emmaus (Vincent and Abel 1932: 235–7 = *SEG* VIII 165); Sha'albim (D. Barag, 'Sha'albim' in *NEAHL*: IV, 1338); Tell Qasile

balance between Greek and Aramaic is in favour of Aramaic, but this may not have been a particular choice of the Jews. More likely it just reflects the fact that most of the excavated synagogues are in villages, and the rural population was less likely to know Greek, not to speak of being literate in it. In cemeteries where urban Jews were buried, as well as in urban synagogues, the proportion between Greek and Aramaic inscriptions is definitely in favour of Greek.

As to CPA, it certainly was an option for a local Christian: a language with a literature (though not original, but all translated from Greek), employed in correspondence, as shown by some of the material discovered at Khirbet Mird, the monastery of Castellion, and also used in private and public inscriptions.⁷ Contrary to the opinion of several scholars (Ben-Asher, Contini, Desreumaux), the beginning of the CPA script must be fixed not in the sixth century, but in the early fifth at the latest, since the earliest dated inscription known so far, in the church of 'Evron (Western Galilee), is firmly dated to year 415 by an adjoining Greek inscription,⁸ and a second, in the lower church at 'Ayun Musa, at the foot of Mount Nebo, belongs in all likelihood to the second half of

(Macuch 1985: 183–5 = *SEG* XXXVII 1526–7; XVII 1469); Tell Ištāba (Zori 1967: 149–67); el-Khirbe (Magen 1993: 194–204; Di Segni 1993: 231–3 = *SEG* XLII 1423–9); Khirbet Majdal (Magen 1993: 222–3; Di Segni in *SEG* XLII 1474); Mount Gerizim (Di Segni 1990: 343–50 = *SEG* XL 1501–6). On Mount Gerizim, hundreds of inscriptions in neo-Hebrew and Aramaic (lapidary and proto-Jewish) scripts were also discovered, but they belong to the period prior to John Hyrcanus' destruction of the Samaritan cultic centre on the mountain (112/111 BCE). The few inscriptions in Samaritan script found there are probably medieval. See Naveh and Magen 1997: 9*–17*; Magen, Misgav and Tsfania *Gerizim*: esp. 13–14. Fragments of two Samaritan inscriptions engraved on marble were discovered in secondary locations on Mount Nebo, but in the excavators' opinion the stones were probably brought there from another site: see Di Segni 1998a: 464, with earlier bibliography.

⁷ See (only the most recent bibliography): Barclay 1971: 209–19; Brock 1978: 255–71; Beyer 1986: 51–3; Desreumaux 1987: 95–107; Bar-Asher 1988: 27–59; Contini 1987 [1990]: 42–4; Müller-Kessler 1991: 9–26; Beyer 1995: 241–57; Griffith 1997: 16–24. For the finds at Khirbet Mird, see De Langhe 1953: 14–19; Milik 1953: 533–9; De Langhe 1954: 3–5; Milik 1961: 21–7; Perrot 1963: 506–55; Cotton 2001: 118. Desreumaux 1987: 99–101 gives an updated list of inscriptions in CPA, to which we can add J. Naveh *apud* Kloner 1990: 139, 30*; Di Segni and Naveh 1996: 77–8; Desreumaux 1999: 435–521 (all the CPA epitaphs in the cemetery at Samra); Desreumaux 1999: 512, n. 11 (sherd with CPA fragment found at Umm er-Rasas); Puech 2001: 61–72; Puech 2003: 317–25.

⁸ Jacques (a mistake for A. Desreumaux) 1997: 54*–6*; the CPA inscription is located in a room at the north-western end of the church, just north of Greek inscription no. 7, dated 415 CE; cf. Tzaferis 1997: 36*, fig. 1 (ground plan), 44*, no. 7. In spite of this evidence, still in 1999 Desreumaux hesitated to admit that the CPA script began in the fifth century and dated its formative period to Justinian's reign (in Desreumaux 1999: 521). The Aramaic dialect that uses the CPA script is much earlier: Bar-Asher (1988: 28, 30) has shown convincingly that it developed at a time when Hebrew was still spoken – thus not later than the early third century. For a collection of sources on the early use of Aramaic in Palestine, see Millar 1971: 6–8.

the fifth century.⁹ CPA, in its classical form, was spoken and written until the eighth century at least; later it had a revival, but this is out of the range of the present discussion. However, the body of CPA inscriptions is meagre, though recently increased by the publication of about eighty-five epitaphs from Khirbet es-Samra. The inscriptions in CPA come from Western Galilee (Shlomi, 'Evron, Kabri, Horvat Qastra), from southern Samaria and Judaea (Abud, also the origin of MSS, Wadi Suweinit, Umm el-Rus, Khirbet Mird, Horvat Qaşra near Eleutheropolis, and Tell Yunis south of Jaffa), and from Transjordan: the area of Irbid, Jerash, el-Quweisme near Amman, Amman itself, Mount Nebo, Umm er-Rasas and the important, but quite exceptional, cemetery of Khirbet es-Samra.¹⁰ Most of the inscriptions are epitaphs; some are graffiti on sherds, some are inscriptions in churches, mostly in association with Greek inscriptions ('Evron, Qastra, Umm er-Rus, Qaşra, Jebel Ajlun and Qam in the Irbid area, 'Ayun Musa, Quweisme). The founding inscription of a hospital comes from the western part of Transjordan.¹¹ Summing up, the spread of the inscriptions is quite respectable, but the number of focuses is modest (about twenty sites in the present state of our knowledge), and the only large concentration is at Samra. We must conclude that, although CPA was certainly an option for a literate Christian of the region in the Byzantine and early Islamic periods, it was adopted by a minority of writers, mostly in rural areas. Syriac inscriptions too are found in the region, but all can be attributed either to pilgrims who left graffiti in holy places,¹² or to Nestorian or Monophysite monks (a church at Deir Makr, a hermitage near Jericho, the monastery of Tel Masos in the Negev).¹³ Certainly Syriac

⁹ In my view, the CPA inscription refers not to some 'priest GY'M (Kayanos) and his heirs' (as interpreted by Puech 1984: 319–28), but to the well-known bishop Gaianus (mid-fifth century) and to his successors (unnamed), who gave money for the building. A Greek inscription in the same pavement says that the mosaic was laid under bishop Cyrus. It seems reasonable to conclude that Cyrus was the immediate successor of Gaianus; otherwise the intervening bishop(s) would have been named. This locates Cyrus in the late fifth century, a date that fits well with the palaeography of the Greek inscriptions of this pavement: see Di Segni 1998b: 452, 455, nos. 59, 63. Piccirillo 2005: 378–80 prefers to insert Fidus and Malechius between Gaianus and Cyrus, who would have held the see of Madaba in the first third of the sixth century, but his order is tentative, based on stylistic considerations.

¹⁰ See references in Desreumaux 1987: 99–101, with the additions indicated in nn. 7–9. At least two Gospels in CPA were copied in a monastery at Abud: see Bagatti 2002: 146–8.

¹¹ Perhaps from Shuneh, not from the area of Jerusalem, as mistakenly stated by Desreumaux 1987: 100. See Milik 1953: 530–3.

¹² E.g. in a cave venerated at Bethany in the Byzantine period: Benoit and Boismard 1951: 231, 241, nos. 50, 70. Other examples in Capernaum, Nazareth, Jerusalem: see Brock 1978: 264–6.

¹³ Naveh 1976: 102–4 (Deir Makr); Baramki and Stephan 1935: 81–6; Maiberger 1983: 158–85. On Syrian monks and Syriac manuscripts in monasteries of Palestine and Arabia, see Contini 1987 [1990]: 56–9; Griffith 1997: 19–20.

did not compete with Greek in inscriptions. Thus we may conclude that Greek was the dominant written language in late antique Palestine and Arabia, especially among the Christians, who by the sixth century were the majority of the population in the region.

Now let us turn to chronology. The date of the Muslim conquest varies from place to place, from the battle of Dathin near Gaza in 634 to the taking of Caesarea in 640, though usually we take as a turning point the siege and capture of Jerusalem in 637/8. It was not immediately apparent then that the Christian, Greek-speaking culture was in danger: it must have taken at least a generation for the local Christians to understand that the newcomers were here to stay, especially in light of the recent episode of the Persian conquest: having arrived in 614, the Persians were gone by 630, and probably in the meantime they were not very visible in most places, just like the Muslim conquerors in the first years after the conquest. Archaeologists still tend to view the year 640, or even 614, as the end of Byzantine building activity, especially when an excavated site lacks Umayyad pottery. However, it is now recognised that Umayyad pottery did not appear until the late seventh century; ergo, its absence in an abandoned or ruined settlement does not prove that the site came to an end at the time of the Muslim conquest. Moreover, not only did churches continue to function after 640, but some were enlarged, restored or embellished, and new ones were erected in the seventh and eighth centuries. Many of these building projects, which are evidence of a flourishing and self-assured Christian life, display inscriptions in Greek.

Some building inscriptions in Greek from the Umayyad period have been known in Hauran even since the surveys of Waddington (1861–2) and of Brünnow and Domaszewski (1897–8).¹⁴ But until the discovery of St Stephen's Church at Umm er-Rasas,¹⁵ nobody would have dared to date a Christian sacred building to the Abbasid period. Although the Church of the Virgin in Madaba was long known, and the date of its redecoration visible, it had not been correctly understood and was thus dated in the seventh century.¹⁶ In fact, the mosaic was completed in February 767 and the date was given according to the Byzantine era of creation. I offered this new interpretation in 1992 and was fortunate enough to receive immediate support from the discovery of a monastic

¹⁴ Waddington and Le Bas 1870: nos. 1997, 2413a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1909: 359–60.

¹⁵ Piccirillo 1987: 180–6. The inscriptions of the *bema* and at the foot of the same were dated 756 and 785 respectively. The latter date was later corrected to 718 by Schick 1991: 75–8.

¹⁶ See Gatier *IGLS* II: 128–31, no. 131, with a history of the different interpretations of the date offered since the discovery of the mosaic in 1890. Gatier dated the inscription to 663 CE.

church in Wadi 'Ain el-Keniseh on Mount Nebo, dated by the same era to year 762.¹⁷ It was then recognised that the building of churches had continued in the seventh and eighth centuries – in Transjordan.¹⁸ As to the region west of the Jordan, however, the current belief was that no sacred building could be later than 640, and the tentative dating of mosaic pavements of churches to a later period, through a stylistic analysis of the mosaic, or through the orthography and palaeography of the inscriptions, if the pavement had any, was usually rejected out of hand. Examples of similar rejections can be found in Avi-Yonah's list of mosaic pavements.¹⁹ Avi-Yonah fought a righteous fight against the tendency of nineteenth-century scholars to date mosaics too early, but also stood against some late dates that may now be deemed acceptable. I shall come back to this later.

In recent years, a number of dated inscriptions have appeared which provide the first evidence that building was going on – and reported in Greek – in ecclesiastical foundations west of the Jordan in the late seventh and the eighth centuries. Here is a list in chronological order:

1. A church excavated at Khirbet Yattir, in the southern Daroma, presents two phases, both dated by inscriptions. A building inscription in the atrium gives the date of erection of the church, May of the year of the city 483, ninth indiction; a second inscription, in the nave, dates the renovation of the mosaic pavement: March 526, sixth indiction.²⁰ Two possible eras must be considered: the era of Eleutheropolis and the era of Provincia Arabia, which sometimes in the Negev was called 'era of the city' (that is, of Elusa). However, neither count leads to an agreement between the year and the indiction; the error in one inscription is not even consistent with the error in the other. The later inscription was discovered first, and when it was brought to my attention by the excavators, I gave the opinion that the era was probably that of Provincia Arabia, giving a date between 1 and 21 March 632, in the fifth indiction, with an error of one year. I reasoned that the disagreement between year and indiction would be even greater

¹⁷ Di Segni 1992: 251–7; Di Segni 1994: 531–3.

¹⁸ The list of ecclesiastical buildings erected or renovated in Transjordan during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods is forever growing. For a general survey, see Piccirillo 2002: 229–43, and for some new discoveries, see Di Segni 2006: 578–92; Di Segni 2006–7: 113–26.

¹⁹ Avi-Yonah 1932, 1933 and 1935.

²⁰ Eshel, Magness and Shenhav 2000: 153–68. On Yattir, ancient Iethira, see Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 151–2, *s.v.*

(two years) if the reckoning was done by the era of Eleutheropolis; but mostly I was influenced by the fact that, at the time, no building inscription later than the Muslim conquest was known west of the Jordan, except in Jerusalem.²¹ On the other hand, this would be by far the northernmost inscription dated by the era of Arabia in western Palestine: Beersheba, where some of the inscriptions are dated by the era of Arabia, is about 25 km to the south-west of Khirbet Yattir. This consideration, and the discovery in the meantime of a Greek inscription dated 701 CE at Khirbet Istabul, also in the Daroma, led me to change my mind when the second and earlier inscription was discovered in the same church at Yattir. Now my opinion is that both must be dated by the era of Eleutheropolis, the city in whose territory all or most of the Daroma was included. Thus the dates are: for the foundation, May 682, in the tenth indiction (instead of the ninth: an error of one year), and for the repaving, March 725, in the eighth indiction (instead of the sixth: an error of two years).²² Both inscriptions mention an abbot, and the church must therefore have been attached to a monastery – or possibly the other way around: a small crew of monks was attached to the church.

2. At Khirbet Istabul, ancient Aristobulias, a church paved with geometric mosaics was excavated by S. Batz on behalf of the Staff Officer of Archaeology – Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria (Antiquities Authority).²³ An inscription in a *tabula ansata* uncovered at the foot of the *bema* commemorates the laying of the mosaic ‘in the month of June, [in the year of Eleuthero]polis 502’, that is, in June 701.²⁴ The

²¹ This conclusion, with the grounds on which it was based, is found in Di Segni 1997a: 673–5, no. 228. In their report (see n. 20), the excavators adopted, for both inscriptions, the dating according to the era of Arabia (oddly styled by them ‘the calendar of Provincia Arabia’, p. 162), and dated the erection of the church in 588/9 and its renovation in 631/2. Noting the absence of early Islamic pottery in this building, they concluded that it was abandoned ‘some time in the seventh century’ (p. 168). The absence of such pottery, however, is easily explained if, as the excavators write elsewhere (p. 163), ‘during the Mamluke period, the church was cleared for reoccupation down to the level of the mosaic floors’. The final report has not yet been published, but from the preliminary report it seems that no trench was cut through the mosaic pavements down to the foundation, or at least that no pottery was recovered from the building stage or from the intermediate phase between the laying of the earlier and later floors.

²² This conclusion, together with the texts of the two inscriptions, is found in Di Segni 2003a: 253–6. Note also the use of Julian months in the Yattir inscriptions: in western Palestine the Julian calendar is all but non-existent in dates given by the era of Arabia: see Di Segni 1997a: 70–4, Tables VIII–X.

²³ The report of the excavation is to be published shortly by the excavator in Y. Magen’s forthcoming book, *Christians and Christianity in Judaea and Samaria*. On the village of Aristobulias, see Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 67, s.v.

²⁴ For the Greek text, see Di Segni 2003a: 252, and for a full discussion, see Di Segni in Magen’s forthcoming book (see n. 23 above).

excavation showed that this was the original pavement of the church; therefore the date must apply, more or less, also to the erection of the building.

3. A new mosaic pavement, covering an earlier one, was laid in a church at Tamra in Lower Galilee: in the dedicatory inscription its date is given as 'June (?), in the eighth indiction, year one hundred and seven', that is, year 725 according to the era of the Hegira, here making its first appearance in a Christian cultic context. Later the church was heavily damaged, apparently by the earthquake of 749, and completely rebuilt.²⁵
4. A church recently excavated at Jabaliyah, near Gaza, was founded in 496/7, enlarged in the mid-sixth century, and repaved in year 732. All dates are given by the era of Gaza of 61 BCE.²⁶
5. In the Jerusalem suburb of Ramot, only flimsy remains survived of what seems to have been a monastic foundation. An inscription commemorates the erection of a chapel dedicated to the martyr George on the 20th of June or July 762; the date is given according to the Alexandrine era of creation.²⁷
6. Another occurrence of an era of creation came to light at Khirbet es-Shubeika, in north-western Galilee. The date of foundation of this church is not known: the excavators suggested the seventh century. It was restructured more than once, and a Greek inscription set in the mosaic of the second phase dates it 'in the year of creation 6293', that is, either 785/6, by the Byzantine era (incarnation 25/3/5508), or 801/2, by the Alexandrine era (incarnation 25/3/5492).²⁸

The above-mentioned finds fill a gap not only in the history of Christianity in western Palestine, but also in our knowledge of the Greek epigraphy of the period, and particularly of its palaeography. Knowing the changes in the forms of letters in the seventh–eighth centuries enables us to date mosaic inscriptions that lack explicit chronological data, and to support datings given on archaeological or historical grounds. For instance, the so-called Church of the Agony, excavated by Bagatti at Dominus Flevit, was dated to the end of the seventh century or the

²⁵ Di Segni and Tepper 2004: 343–50.

²⁶ On the mosaic pavements, see Humbert *et al.* 2000: 121–6; on the inscriptions, Saliou 2000: 390–411. The inscription dated 732 is no. 15 at 405–6.

²⁷ Arav, Di Segni and Kloner 1990: 313–20; for the month, see Feissel 1992: 546, no. 650.

²⁸ For the excavation, see Syon 2003: 75–82; for the inscriptions, see Tzaferis 2003: 83–6. A complete report of the excavation, including the finds (pottery, glass, coins etc.), was published by Avshalom-Gorni *et al.* 2002: 220–349.

beginning of the eighth, based on the descriptions of the site by pilgrims; the palaeography of the two building inscriptions in the church and in the adjoining chapel is quite consistent with this date.²⁹ The western wing of the monastery recently excavated on Mt Scopus was dated to the late seventh or to the eighth century, based on Umayyad coins found under the mosaic pavement that bears the inscription: again, the palaeography fits very well a date in the eighth century.³⁰ A mosaic pavement with Greek inscriptions indicating its belonging to a sacred building was uncovered by Vincent at Battir (ancient Bethar in Judaea) at the beginning of the last century. No excavation was carried out, owing to the hostility of the local inhabitants, but Vincent dated the mosaic to the seventh or even eighth century, based on its style. His opinion was viewed with scepticism by other scholars and rejected by Avi-Yonah.³¹ However, the palaeographical appearance of the inscriptions fully justifies Vincent's late date, in light of what we know now. A strict examination of other Christian cult buildings, freed from the presumption that these monuments cannot have been erected after the Muslim conquest, is likely to discover more churches of the seventh and eighth centuries in western Palestine.

Why can we speak only of church inscriptions? Because, apart from epitaphs, and with the notable exception of the Mu'awiya inscription at Hammath Gader,³² there are no other Greek inscriptions that can be dated with certainty to the seventh and eighth centuries, although many can be dated to this late period by surmise: for instance, on lamps.³³ If we desire to know which types of Greek inscriptions existed during the Byzantine and early Islamic period, the entire body of dated and undated texts can be put to use; but only dated inscriptions can serve to trace

²⁹ Bagatti 1956: 268–70; Milik 1960: 550–5, no. 22. Milik dated the church between the visit of Arculf (c. 670–80) and that of Willibald (c. 725). The chapel is some years later than the church, as attested by the contents of the inscriptions.

³⁰ Amit, Seligman and Zilberbod 2003: 139–48; Di Segni 2003b: 149–51.

³¹ Vincent 1910: 254–61, and see other opinions in Avi-Yonah 1932: 142–3, no. 13.

³² *Editio princeps* (reading and translation by V. Tzaferis and Y. Tsafrir) in Hirschfeld and Solar 1981: 202–4; *SEG* XXX 1687; XXXII 1501; XLII 1433. For a new discussion, see Di Segni 1997b: 237–40, no. 54. For a survey of Greek inscriptions of the early Islamic period, see Gatiér 1992: 145–58.

³³ Loffreda 1989: 187–213. Only one lamp with Greek inscription is dated, thanks to an additional inscription in Arabic impressed on it: the date is 211 of the Hegira, i.e. 826 CE. A few lamps with Arabic inscriptions include years of the Hegira, and can help to date particular types of lamp that were also manufactured with Greek inscriptions (Loffreda 1989: 187). Magnes 1993: 249–59, gives a chronology of lamps and her latest types, 3 D, 4 and 5, belong to the Muslim period. Among the lamps from Beth Shean published by Hadad *Oil Lamps*, two types, 28 and 29, sometimes bear Greek or Arabic inscriptions, in one case a bilingual inscription, and were in use until the earthquake of 749 that destroyed the city at the end of the Umayyad period; in Jordan type 29 was in use also in the early Abbasid period, up to the late eighth or early ninth century (Hadad *Oil Lamps*: 66–71).

changes of any kind. Let us now try to sketch a picture of the epigraphic production of the fourth–eighth centuries, based on the dated inscriptions. I explored this topic years ago, from the angle of the epigraphic documentation of building activity, and I refer the reader to that research, and especially to the accompanying tables.³⁴ The updated data show no notable changes in the basic picture, except for the important novelty described above, namely, the filling of the gap in the building activity of the seventh and eighth centuries west of the Jordan. Here I shall limit myself to a brief survey of the resulting picture.

If we separate the western from the eastern part of the country, and the religious from the non-religious buildings, we notice, first, that the latter are less numerous than the former, and all (except the Mu'awiya inscription at Hammath Gader) not later than the sixth century. Second, non-religious buildings in the west do not include strictly military structures, but only defensive works and service buildings for the army, and very few of these,³⁵ while in the east a large proportion of the non-religious buildings consists of forts and hostels for travelling officials (mostly concentrated in the fourth century), walls and gates. Third, the erection of non-religious buildings all but ceases before the end of Justinian's reign, and more precisely after the year 540/1: beyond this date, all the inscriptions either commemorate the renovation of existing buildings or are of uncertain significance.³⁶

³⁴ The study was presented at the meeting of the seminar on Urbanism in Late Antiquity, held at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem in May 1997, and the results appeared in Di Segni 1999: 149–78; see especially tables 1–6, at 159–63. Each entry in the tables refers to one or more dated inscriptions indicating the erection or renovation of one building.

³⁵ A hostelry for travelling officers at Eleutheropolis, c. 364–82 (*SEG* XXXII 1496; XXXV 1537; for the date, see Di Segni 1997a: 661–3); erection of a *burgus* (probably a kind of fortified khan rather than a tower of the city wall) at Caesarea, shortly after 500 CE (Schwabe 1949: 273–83; republished by Lifshitz 1961: 123–6; for the type of building and the date, see Di Segni 1997a: 450–5); renovation of the city wall at Beth Shean in 524–6 (*SEG* VIII 34–5). I wonder whether the inscription of John the *vicarius* and his subordinate officers at Shivta (*SEG* XXXI 1453; for the date, 599 rather than 505, see Di Segni 1997a: 814–7), whose location and association with the village buildings are unknown, cannot have belonged to Building 3, possibly a military depot rather than a khan: see Hirschfeld 2003: 402 and see fig. 3 at 398. My late lamented friend Yizhar Hirschfeld, with his habitual generosity, let me read his paper before it was published.

³⁶ Renovation of a bath house at Beth Shean, 558/9 (Avi-Yonah 1963: 325–6), the club house of the Blues and the bath of Flaccus at Jerash, 578 and 584 (*SEG* XXXVII 1548; Welles 'The Inscriptions': 475–6, no. 297), a fort at Zizia, 580 (*IGLJ* II 155), and the bath house at Hammath Gader, 662 (*SEG* XXX 1687, and cf. nn. 32 and 44). A marble medallion representing a Tyche bust, with the name of a governor and a Pompeian date referring to 584/5 CE, was found far from its original location, and while it was most likely associated with building activity in an urban centre, there is no way of guessing what was actually done (*SEG* XLIX 2059). The meaning of the inscription from Shivta mentioned above (n. 35) is uncertain: in the lack of archaeological background, the words 'this work was done' may refer equally well to a new building or to the renovation of an existing

When we examine all the dated building inscriptions in the whole region, another peculiarity leaps to the eye: the graph shows a sudden drop between 540 and 550, then it rises again, shows a second drop in the years 615–620, followed by a rise, and becomes rather low after 640; more or less the same can be noticed in the separate graphs of the western and eastern parts of the region. While the drop between 615 and 20 can be easily explained as a result of reduced building activity during the Persian invasion, the reason for the first is less evident. We shall try to formulate a hypothesis based on a survey of dated epitaphs.

Dated epitaphs from the period in discussion come mostly from the Negev and from ancient Moab.³⁷ Many epitaphs from other areas are preserved, but they are either undated (e.g. those from Jaffa and Caesarea in Israel, from Khirbet es-Samra in Jordan) or throw no light on the problem because they cease before the relevant period (Zo'ar).³⁸ In Hauran in the relevant period there are a not inconsiderable number of dated inscriptions referring to the erection of funeral monuments by living persons (especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, less so in the sixth), but very few epitaphs.³⁹ So any evidence pertaining to the relevant years must necessarily refer almost exclusively to the Negev and to the Kerak plateau; however, the data can be taken as reflecting faithfully enough the mortality rate in the southern part of the country in the relevant period. The epitaphs graphically show a sudden peak between 540 and 550, which matches the drop in the quantity of building inscriptions in the same period. This appears to be the result of the plague of 541/2,

one. Two very fragmentary inscriptions from Bostra, *IGLS* XIII I 9135–6, mention a curtain wall, built by the metropolitan archbishop Thomas under Justinian. The date can be fixed between 554 and 565; but even if the wall was 'built from the foundations' (a phrase that not always implies erection *ex nihilo*), it was but the completion of a project initiated by Thomas' predecessor, John, and financed by the provincial treasury through Justinian's benevolence. The project included several public buildings, among them a defensive wall, all dated in the years 535–41 (*IGLS* XIII I 9128–37). New buildings of non-religious character were erected under Muslim rule and some are dated on historical grounds: Greek inscriptions were discovered at least in two of them, Quseir 'Amra (705–15) and Khirbet Mafjar (724–43). However, they were not public buildings but private mansions, albeit of the overlords of the time, and the inscriptions were left by the artists who decorated them. On these inscriptions and their meaning, see below.

³⁷ For the Negev, see Alt 1921; Alt 1923: 51–64; Kirk and Welles 1962: 131–97; Negev 1981; Tsafir 1988: 154–86. For the Kerak Plateau, see Canova 1954. The dated epitaphs are also found in Meimaris 1992: *passim*.

³⁸ Meimaris and Kritikakou-Nikolaropoulou 2005. Of 381 inscriptions in this corpus, 290 are dated, of which 276 are of the fourth and fifth centuries, only 14 of the sixth (none of those of the forties of this century), not one of the seventh. A table of dated Aramaic epitaphs from the same necropolis, published by Cotton and Price 2001: 283, shows that only 3 out of 26 bear dates in the early sixth century, while all the others are of the fourth and fifth.

³⁹ This is clearly shown by a survey of the inscriptions collected by Meimaris 1992: 162–304.

which caused not only many deaths, but also a slackening of all activities, including building.⁴⁰

The reign of Justinian is a turning point also from another angle. Justinian's last year is almost exactly midway between the earliest dated inscriptions from the reign of Constantius II and the last dated inscription in our list. If we take the 220 years from 565 on, and the 220 years from 565 back, we observe that in the earlier period the number of epigraphically documented building projects in villages and in cities is almost equal (seventy-eight in villages, seventy-three in cities),⁴¹ while in the later period building initiatives in cities are fewer than half the number of those in villages (thirty-one against sixty-four). The number of urban projects steadily declines: of the said thirty-one, seventeen (54.8 per cent) concentrate in the last third of the sixth century, eleven (35.5 per cent) fall within the seventh century and three (9.6 per cent) in the eighth. On the other hand, the proportion of non-urban building projects steadily increases: of forty-one buildings erected in the last third of the sixth century, twenty-four (58.5 per cent) are in villages; of the same number built in the course of the seventh century, twenty-nine (70.7 per cent) are in villages, and of thirteen built in the eighth century, eleven (84.6 per cent) are in villages. For comparison, in the hundred years before 565 we count ninety-seven building projects, fifty-five of which (56.7 per cent) were located in cities. It is possible to pinpoint still more accurately the moment at which the change in trend takes place. If we exclude from the period up to 565 the last 24 years (542–65), we are left with seventy-two building projects, of which forty-four (61.1 per cent) were located in cities. The proportion is almost exactly the same in the hundred years before 541 (eighty-four projects, fifty-one or 60.7 per cent, in cities). But in the 24 years 542–65 the balance between urban and non-urban project is inverse: of twenty-five projects, eleven (44 per

⁴⁰ Some supporting evidence comes from adjoining areas. For instance, a new reading of an epitaph from Punon in the 'Aravah seems to show that it was dated in June 542, 'in the year when the people sickened and a third of the world died'. A second epitaph from the same site seemingly bore the same date and formula. See Di Segni 2006: 590–2. Another epitaph, from Gaza (*SEG* VIII 271), marked the common burial of three children of the same family who died on 3 June and 17 June of the fourth indiction. The year is not indicated, but the circumstances of their death and burial may point to June 541, in the fourth indiction, when the plague first broke out in Gaza.

⁴¹ Erection of forts, public hostels and unidentified buildings by village stewards accounts for a large number of items, especially in the Hauran. An episcopal see counts as a city, even if it does not have a past as a polis. The numbers quoted in this paragraph refer to the itemised lists in the appendix to Di Segni 1999. Updated data would widen even more the gap between building projects in villages and in cities.

cent) were in cities, fourteen (56 per cent) in villages – almost the same proportions we have observed in the building activity of the last third of the sixth century.

Looking at the evidence from another point of view, we observe that in the main urban centres – Beth Shean, Caesarea, Bostra, Gerasa – building activity almost ceases after Justinian's reign, while in the second part of the sixth century and in the seventh, churches begin to be built in large numbers in villages: most notably in Khirbet es-Samra, Rihab and Umm er-Rasas in Transjordan, but a similar trend can be detected also in western Palestine, for instance in the western Negev, the hinterland of Gaza. Is what emerges a change in the settlement pattern? More, and more diversified, evidence would be needed to reach this conclusion: we shall be content with noting that a change of habits has certainly taken place, pertaining both to what is built and where it is built. Looking at the general picture *a posteriori*, without letting our eyes be dazzled by showy events like battles and sieges, the milestones of political history, we might be tempted to locate the start of a transition not at the time of the Muslim conquest or soon after, but rather in 541/2. Although, if we look only at the quantity of building there is no noticeable decline until the Persian conquest, nevertheless a profound cultural change can undoubtedly be traced to that fatal year, the year of the plague. It is a change of focus, perhaps also a change of mood, but not, apparently, connected to a material crisis. For the curve of building soars up again after that, and building activity means prosperity, or at least a surplus of production. This was true perhaps for the inhabitants of the countryside more than for the urban population.

It is easily understood why the changed balance between city and village might have affected the currency of Greek. It will be enough to point out that, even if the status of Greek had been equal in the urban and rural milieux when the shift took place, moving away from the city – especially for the well-to-do, the people with the money to build churches – meant losing contact with the bishop's court and the cultural activity in Greek that took place there.⁴² But Greek showed a notable hardness, and perhaps still more as a cultural vehicle than as a spoken language. Some examples: in the bathhouse of Hammath Gader,

⁴² Further, the cultural activity of the Palestinian monasteries was projected towards the city, for their focus of interest was there rather than in the villages, even if the monasteries themselves were located in the countryside: see Di Segni 2001: 31–6; Di Segni 2005: 24–50.

the official inscription commemorating the restoration of the hot-water system under Mu'awiya in 662 CE is worded in Greek.⁴³ It reads:

By order of 'Abdallah Mu'awiya, *amir al-moumenin*, the hot-water system here was cleared and renewed by 'Abdallah son of Abu Hashim (or Abu 'Asim) the *symbolos*,⁴⁴ on Monday, December 5, of the sixth indiction, in the year 726 of the colony, year 42 according to the Arabs, for the healing of the sick, under the care of the steward John of Gadara.

The phrasing anticipates the formulary of official inscriptions in Arabic, which as a rule mention three hierarchical grades involved in the building: the ruler, the official responsible locally and the steward in charge of the actual execution. The date is given by the era of Gadara as well as by the year of the Hegira, the personages are given their proper titles according to the new regime – Mu'awiya, his Arab title transliterated into Greek, 'Abdallah, a Greek designation of office now applied to a different function – and, last but not least, the text opens with a cross. The whole is a beautiful example of the vigorous endurance of Greek – in format as well as language – as a vehicle of the indigenous culture, vis-à-vis the requirements of the new. Other illustrations of the coexistence of the two come from the halls of Walid I (705–15) and of Hisham (724–43), respectively at Quseir 'Amra and Khirbet al-Mafjar. At Quseir 'Amra, the frescoes feature allegorical figures labelled in Greek and defeated enemies of Islam labelled in Greek and Arabic; the former language as expression of the culture of the Christian artists, the latter in homage to the patron's pride.⁴⁵ At Khirbet al-Mafjar the remains of stone pavements and revetments bear fragmentary Greek inscriptions engraved by the builders.⁴⁶ Apparently, as late as the first half of the eighth century, Arabisation of the local population in many parts of the region was still to come, and if masons and painters still wrote Greek, how much stronger must have been the durability of the language among educated Christians – members of the clergy and of the upper class. The situation, however, was fluid, or possibly different in different parts of the country. For instance, lamps bearing Greek inscriptions of Christian character, whose main centres of production seem to have been in the areas of Jerusalem and Jerash, were

⁴³ For bibliographical references, see n. 32.

⁴⁴ In the documents in Greek of the early Arab period, at least until the time of 'Abd el-Malik (685–705), the term σύμβουλος designates the governor of a *jund* (province) or a *kura* (district): Lammens 1910–12: 106; *P.Nessana* 58, 10; 72, 1; 73, 1; 75, 3; 158, 3.

⁴⁵ Nöldeke 1907: esp. 223–5.

⁴⁶ Schwabe 1946: 20–30. There is no reason to believe that monks chose or were forced to work in the building, as suggested by Schwabe, for literacy was not necessarily a monopoly of the clergy.

manufactured from the fifth to the ninth centuries.⁴⁷ In the first half of the eighth century the same types of lamps began to feature Arabic inscriptions too, alone or coupled with Greek inscriptions.⁴⁸ The church of Hagia Salome at Horvat Qaşra, near Beth Govrin, provides another example. Here a tomb of the Second Temple period was transformed into an underground church and was in use as such in the Byzantine and early Islamic period, as attested by the sherds of pottery, lamps and glass found in the excavation. On its walls many inscriptions were incised, including graffiti left by pilgrims. Most are in Greek – a Greek with orthographical, grammatical and palaeographic characteristics of a late age, not earlier than the seventh century – two are in CPA and five in Arabic.⁴⁹ Unlike several known examples of Arabic graffiti of the second and third centuries of the Hegira, which were scratched on the walls of abandoned churches, for instance at Mamphis, Ruheibe and other sites in the Negev,⁵⁰ those of Hagia Salome were inscribed by Arabic-speaking Christians and may have been contemporary with at least some of the Greek graffiti. The church was a focus of pilgrimage, but a modest one, and the pilgrims are not likely to have come from afar; so the graffiti may attest an earlier Arabisation in this area than in other districts. Possibly those Arabic-speaking Christians were Arabic speakers who had adopted Christianity in settling in this area one or two centuries before the Islamic conquest, for many of the names even in the Greek graffiti are Arab; but a different pace of Arabisation is not necessarily due to a different ethnic background.

The phenomenon of cultural resistance can be observed not only in the persistence of Greek, but also in the persistence of the ancient chronological systems: the eras of Gaza, Eleutheropolis, Hippos, Philadelphia and Provincia Arabia continued to be used in the eighth century. Even the new system, the creation era (or rather eras) attested in inscriptions of the eighth century is rooted in Greek-Christian culture and was already current in sixth-century hagiography and historiography.⁵¹

⁴⁷ The latest dated example is a lamp manufactured in Jerash and dated 211 of the Hegira, i.e. 826 CE: Khairy and 'Amr 1986: 150, fig. 10, pl. 40: 11; Loffreda 1989: 49, 187, table 12: 7–8.

⁴⁸ The earliest dated example is of the year 723: Khairy and 'Amr 1986: 145, fig. 3, pl. 38: 4; Loffreda 1989: 187–8.

⁴⁹ Kloner 1990: 127–37; Drori 1990: 137–9; Naveh 1990: 139; Di Segni and Patrich 1990: 141–54.

⁵⁰ Nevo 1988: 187–92. Early Arabic graffiti were also inscribed on the walls of the crypt in the church of Horvat Berachot (Khirbet Bureikut, in the Hebron Hills); one was ascribed to the first century of the Hegira: Drori 1979: 324–6. Many of these graffiti were pious invocations written by Muslims in conscious imitation of the inscriptions left by the Christians in the same places.

⁵¹ See examples and discussion in Di Segni 2006 and 2006–7.

One last observation: Greek in the transitional period shows much the same characteristics in our region as in other regions of the Byzantine Empire: iotacism, loss of case distinction and so on.⁵² However, there is one particular phonetic phenomenon which I could not find in other regions: namely, the shift between the sounds A and O. For instance, in the eastern part of the region we find Προκάπης for Προκόπιος, Δωράθεος for Δωρόθεος, Θεάδωρος and Θεάδαρος for Θεόδωρος, Ἑρμάλαος for Ἑρμόλαος, θεμελιάθειν for θεμελιωθέν, εἰσελεύσανται for εἰσελεύσονται, as well as masculine names ending in -ας and -ιας instead of -ος and -ιος; and on the other hand, Ἰωώννης for Ἰωάννης, Μόξιμα for Μάξιμα, προσφορόν, παρό, ζήσος, ζήσσοσα, τελευτήσος, ἐνθόδε, καμάντων, ἡργάσσοντα instead of προσφοράν, παρά, ζήσας, ζήσασα, τελευτήσας, ἐνθάδε, καμόντων, ἡργάσαντο, and the like. This shift is also well known in Semitic names: Αλειφος/Ολεφος, Ραβεβος/Ροβεβος, and so on.⁵³ Reginetta Canova observed the phenomenon in Moab and ascribed it to the influence of Aramaic: it would have been CPA in the relevant time and location. But, though in CPA there are vocalic changes, there is no shift between A and O.⁵⁴ Moreover, the phenomenon is absent at Samra, where Greek and CPA were used side by side. On the contrary, Arab vocalisation may well be responsible for it: it is for the linguists to decide. A hint in this direction is provided by the inscription of a private tomb in Pella, dated 521/2, in which two soldiers, both called Ἰωώννης, describe themselves as of Arabian stock: ὁρμώμενοι ἀπὸ χ(ωρ)ῶν τοῦ Ἀράβων ἔθνους.⁵⁵ On lamps with the inscription φῶς Χ(ριστο)ῦ φέινι πᾶσιν, πῶσιν for πᾶσιν seems frequent, but the letters on lamps are so deformed that a cursive A can easily look like an O. On the other hand, it is precisely on lamps that we find evidence of the pronunciation of P as B (βᾶσιν for πᾶσιν), typical of Arabic speakers.⁵⁶

Much could also be learned about Arabisation from the connection between names and social status. In church inscriptions, Arabisation appears early in the names of laymen and especially workers (e.g. masons

⁵² I have the impression that diphthongs are more easily lost in Palestine than, for instance, in Asia Minor (perhaps due to the influence of Aramaic?), but this cannot be maintained without a systematic checking.

⁵³ Canova 1954: CVII–CVIII; Sartre *JGLS* XIII, 1: 36–7; Di Segni 1998b: 438, 451, 452, 454, nos. 34, 35, 58, 60, 62; *SEG* XLI no. 1573. One can explain in this sense also the strange spelling ANAOWΞEN for ἀνέωξεν in an inscription from Dhakir in Hauran, dictated by an Arab phylarch, dated 455/6 (*SEG* XLIII 1088).

⁵⁴ Bar-Asher 1988: 43–4, 47–50.

⁵⁵ *SEG* XLI 1573. The inscription from Dhakir (above, n. 53) may point in the same direction.

⁵⁶ Loffreda 1989: 53, 177, types D 1.1 and D 1.2. Some lamps also present the form κολισπέρα instead of καλησπέρα: Loffreda 1989: 43, 171, types A 5.5 and A 5.6.

or mosaic-layers), while clergy and donors bear Greek and biblical names. This is the picture presented by sixth-century church inscriptions on Mount Nebo, and it does not necessarily mean that people of Arab stock had infiltrated the lower layers of the population, while the upper class consisted of Greco-Aramaean inhabitants.⁵⁷ It only means that the well-to-do – those who could afford to be patrons of a church, and had access to education and thus to the clergy – clung to the long-established Hellenised culture, whatever their ethnic origin. In the seventh and eighth century the division is still the same, at least as it appears from the inscriptions at Yattir and Istabul: the clergy bear Greek and biblical names (possibly acquired with their accession to the ecclesiastical status), laymen bear Semitic (Aramaic or Arab) names.⁵⁸ Any conclusions on this matter, however, would require a much more extensive and thorough examination of onomastic data.

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⁵⁷ Di Segni 1998b: 457–8.

⁵⁸ Di Segni 2003a: 252–4.

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Arab kings, Arab tribes and the beginnings of Arab historical memory in late Roman epigraphy

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As a historian of the late Roman/early Islamic Middle East I read enviously the publications available to historians of western Europe for the same period, such as those by Patrick Geary, Walter Pohl, Peter Heather and others, which treat so well the Roman interaction with and integration of the 'western barbarians'.¹ Geary's point regarding the Franks that 'their very existence as well as every phase of their history makes sense only within the context of Roman presence in northern Europe, for their genesis as a people and gradual transformation into the conquerors of much of Europe were from the start part of the Roman experience'² has long struck me as pertinent to understanding the rise of the Muslim Arab Empire. Yet sadly no such studies have been composed treating the same subject in respect of the 'eastern barbarians', i.e. the tribes on Rome's eastern frontier, and these tribes never get more than the briefest of mentions in survey works on the Roman/medieval Mediterranean world. Irfan Shahid has done the great service of laying the groundwork with his exhaustively documented volumes on *Byzantium and the Arabs*,³ but no one has used these to produce a narrative/discursive study à la Geary or Pohl. Unable to claim to be intrinsic to the formation of Europe,⁴ these 'eastern barbarians' still suffer from a lack of focused attention and from a lingering sense that their role in the history of the late Roman Empire was minimal.⁵ Arabists are less likely to think along these lines, but they

¹ Geary 1988; Pohl 1997; Pohl 1998; Pohl, Wood and Reimitz 2001; Pohl and Diesenberger 2002; Heather 1994b; Heather 1999.

² Geary 1988: vii–viii. ³ Shahid 1984–2002, four volumes and a prolegomenon so far.

⁴ There is no eastern counterpart to the EU-funded *Transformation of the Roman World* (in the west) project, which sadly never thought to include even one article on the Near East in all its volumes. New synthetic works on the Mediterranean are starting to include some coverage of the early Islamic Near East, but not on the 'Arabs' of the late Roman Near East (this is the pattern, for example, of Wickham 2005, which is, however, to be commended for its coverage of the early Islamic Levant).

⁵ E.g. 'The lack of detailed information in Greek historians about Arab affairs in the sixth and seventh centuries accurately reflects their lack of importance in contemporary wars and diplomacy', in Whitby 1992: 80; cited approvingly by Whittow 1999: 219 in a review of I. Shahid.

rarely have the depth of knowledge of the Roman Empire necessary to redress this imbalance.

In this article I would like to draw to the attention of late Romanists a number of new and striking phenomena occurring in the epigraphic record of the third/fourth-century Middle East, in the hope that they will use their greater experience to elucidate them further. First, the appearance of 'Arab'⁶ kings of 'Arab' tribes, by which I mean that these monarchs and their tribes are known to and described as 'Arab' by Muslim historians, which suggests that we have entered the earliest period of Muslim Arab historical recollection. Second, there is the deployment of (Old) Arabic in inscriptions.⁷ The usual practice in the Middle East for parvenu leaders was to write in the local language of prestige, at this time Greek and Aramaic, and so these texts in Arabic are of great significance, presumably reflecting a desire on the part of the commissioners to make a statement about their ethnic and/or cultural affiliation and a demonstration of their political power, though probably also related to the efflorescence of a whole range of languages and scripts across the Roman Empire at this time (Gothic, Coptic, Palestinian Aramaic, Armenian and Georgian). Third, there is the emergence of the term 'Saracen' to designate nomads and a narrowing in the application of the term 'Arab', which becomes reserved more and more for denoting residents of the province of Arabia.

THE TEXTS

'Arab' kings and 'Arab' tribes

*1. Rabi'a ibn Mu'awiya of Kinda and Qahṭān*⁸

Date: c. 220 CE (in the reign of the Sabaeen king Sha'r Awtar).

Language: ESA (Epigraphic South Arabian, i.e. the language that is used in the inscriptions of pre-Islamic South Arabia).

⁶ I put Arab within quotes in this article to emphasise that it is difficult to be sure whether that is how the people I am discussing habitually described themselves. Almost all our references to Arabs come from outsiders, who used the term Arab in different ways at different times. And in the fourth–sixth centuries the nomads whom modern scholars typically refer to as Arabs were no longer labelled as such by Romans and Persians, but rather as Saracens and Ṭayyāyē. However, it is such a well-established term for the tribal peoples of the Arabian Peninsula (excluding Yemen) and the Syrian Desert that I shall continue to use it here for convenience.

⁷ For simplicity I will just use the term 'Arabic' in this article, but the reader should note that, given how few texts we have in Arabic from the pre-Islamic period, it is difficult to be sure how similar/different it was to the Arabic of the Islamic period and for this reason some scholars use the term Old Arabic to designate the pre-Islamic variety. See Müller 1982; Robin 2001: 545–56; Macdonald 2000: 48–57; Macdonald (in press).

⁸ Plausibly this is the Rabi'a ibn Mu'awiya al-Akramūn b. al-Ḥārith al-Aṣghar b. Mu'awiya b. al-Ḥārith al-Akbar b. Mu'awiya b. Thawr b. 'Amr Muratti' b. Mu'awiya b. Kinda listed by Ibn al-Kalbī,

Provenance: Bilqis temple, Marib, in modern Yemen.

Type: Votive, thanks for success in battle.

‘the two engagements against Rabī’a of the lineage of Thawr, king of Kinda and Qaḥṭān (*Rb’t d-l Thwr mlk Kdt w-Qḥṭn*), and against the lords of the city of Qaryat’.⁹

2. *al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b of al-Asd*¹⁰ and *Mālik ibn Baddā’ of Kinda*¹¹

Date: 230–55 (in the reign of the Sabaean king Ilīsharaḥ Yaḥḍub and his brother and co-regent Ya’zil Bayān).

Language: ESA.

Provenance: Bilqis temple, Marib.

Type: Votive, thanks for safe return and for success in battle.

‘when he had been sent (as an envoy) to the kings (*mlk*) of the north, al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b, king of Asd (*mlk šd*), and Mālik ibn Baddā’, king of Kinda and Madhḥij (*mlk kdt w-mdḥj*), and various *a’rāb*’.¹²

3. *Kings of Ghassān, al-Asd, Nizār and Madhḥij*

Date: c. 260 (in the reign of the Sabaean king Ilīsharaḥ Yaḥḍub alone).

Language: ESA.

Provenance: Bilqis temple, Marib.

Type: Votive, thanks for safe return.

‘because he returned safely from Syria where his lord Ilīsharaḥ Yaḥḍub, king of Saba and Dhu Raydan, sent him (as an envoy) to the kings of the peoples (*mlk šh’b*) of Ghassān, al-Asd, Nizār and Madhḥij’.¹³

Jamhara: I, tables 233–5 (note closeness to genealogy of Mālik ibn Baddā’ in n. 11 below). Possibly the Mu’āwiya ibn Rabī’a, king of Qaḥṭān and Madhḥij, mentioned in an inscription from Qaryat al-Faw (al-Ansary 1981: 144) is a relative of his.

⁹ Jamme 1962: 137 (known to Sabaicists as Ja 635.26–27 = DAI-Bar’an 2000–1); see also Nebes 2004: 273–88. The city is Qaryat al-Faw, which seems to have been a base for the tribes of Kinda and Qaḥṭān and has yielded a number of Arabic inscriptions; see Robin 1991c: 113–25.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Kalbī lists two al-Ḥārith ibn al-Ka’bs of al-Asd (*Jamhara*: I, tables 203 and 210).

¹¹ A Mālik ibn Baddā’ is listed in Ibn al-Kalbī (*Jamhara*: I, table 233) whose mother was a Yaz’anid: Mālik b. Baddā b. al-Ḥārith al-Akbar b. Mu’āwiya b. Thawr b. ‘Amr Muratti’ b. Mu’āwiya b. Kinda.

¹² Beeston 1986: 33–6 (known to Sabaicists as Ja 2110.7–10); cf. Jamme 1962: no. 67 (= Ja 576.2), regarding ‘the reparation which Mālik (ibn Baddā’) was required to make to Almaqah and the kings of Saba, (namely the person of) Imru’ al-Qays son of ‘Awf, king of Khaṣāša’. Beeston suggests reading Asad rather than Asd (in Arabic: Azd), as the latter is usually written with the Arabic definite article *al-* (e.g. nos. 3–4 below), but since the *al* is a foreign particle it might easily be omitted and Asad are not known from other south Arabian inscriptions.

¹³ Bafaqih and Robin 1978: 51 (known to Sabaicists as ‘Inan 75) (Robin and Gajda 1994: 113–37).

4. *Mālik ibn Ka'b of al-Asd*¹⁴

Date: 275–310 (in the reign of the Sabaeen king Shammar Yuhar'ish).

Language: ESA.

Provenance: Bilqis temple, Marib.

Type: Votive, thanks for safe return.

'when his lord Shammar Yuhar'ish sent him (as an envoy) with Mālik ibn Ka'b, king of al-Asd (*mlk l-'sd*)... and to Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the two royal cities of the Persians, and to the land of Tanūkh (*ard tnh*)'.¹⁵

5. *Gādima of Tanūkh*

Date: mid-third century (based on identification with Jadhīma al-Abrash of the Muslim sources which say that he lived on into the reign of the Persian emperor Shapur I [242–70]).¹⁶

Language: Greek and Aramaic.

Provenance: Umm al-Jimal in modern north Jordan.

Type: Epitaph for the tutor (*tropheus/rbw*) of 'Gādima king of Tanūkh'.

Gadimathou basileus thanouitōn / Gdmt mlk tnuh.¹⁷

6. *Amr king of Lakhm*¹⁸

Date: 293–302 (in reign of the Sasanian emperor Narseh).

Language: Persian and Parthian.

Provenance: Paikuli by the modern Iraq–Iran border.

Type: Monumental, commemorating events leading up to accession of Narseh plus his recognition by other rulers.

'Amr king of Lakhm' (*'Amrw lhm'dyn mlk*).¹⁹

7. *Imru' al-Qays ibn Amr*

Date: 328 CE (dated; NB this date fits with his being the son of no. 6).

Language: Arabic (but in Nabataean Aramaic script).

¹⁴ There is a Mālik ibn Ka'b of al-Asd in Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara*: I, 209, but it is impossible to say whether they are the same.

¹⁵ Müller 1974: 155–65 (known to Sabaicists as Sharaf 31).

¹⁶ Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara*: I, table 211; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Tārikh* 84. In the Islamic tradition he is killed by queen Zabbā, who is assumed to be queen Zenobia of Palmyra (d. 273); see below.

¹⁷ Littmann 1914–49: 4A.41; see also Sartre 1979: 253–8.

¹⁸ Usually identified with 'Amr ibn 'Adī, nephew of and successor to Jadhīma al-Abrash in the Muslim Arabic sources: Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara*: I, table 246; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Tārikh* 85 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh* 1.768, ('he was the first Arab king to settle in Hira and the first of the Arab kings of Iraq whom the Hīrans celebrated in their writings'); al-Ṭabarī (citing Ibn al-Kalbī) goes on to emphasise that the history of this dynasty 'is known and recorded among the Hīrans; it is known from their church records'.

¹⁹ Humbach and Skjaervo 1983: 92.

Provenance: Nemara, a Roman outpost south-east of Damascus.

Type: Epitaph.

‘Imru’ al-Qays son of ‘Amr, king of all the Arabs/all the (province of) ‘Arab, who . . . ruled both sections of al-Asd and Nizār and their kings, and chastised Madhḥij . . . and he ruled Ma‘add’.²⁰

Arabic

7. *Imru’ al-Qays ibn ‘Amr, as above.*

8. *Ka‘b son of Ḥāritha*²¹

Date: 267 (dated).

Language: Arabic with Aramaic elements.

Provenance: Hegra, north-west Arabia.

Type: Funerary text.

‘This is the tomb which Ka‘b son of Ḥāritha made for Raqūsh daughter of ‘Abdmanāt, his mother, who died in al-Ḥijr in the year 162 in the month of Tammuz. May the Lord of the World curse whoever violates this tomb and whoever opens it, bar his offspring, and may He curse whoever inters (a body) in it and removes (a body) from it.’²²

9. *Garmalahi son of Taymalahi*

Date: Undated, difficult to fix more precisely than first–fourth centuries CE.

Language: Aramaic with two lines in Arabic.

Provenance: Oboda (‘Ayn ‘Abada/En Avdat), southern Palestine.

Type: Votive, request for protection.

Opening in Aramaic calling for the author, who is making an offering, and whoever reads it, to be remembered by Obodas the god, followed by a ritual text in Arabic: ‘For He (Obodat) acts (expecting) no reward nor predilection / Though death has often sought us out, He afforded it no

²⁰ This Imru’ al-Qays (Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara* I, table 246) and his epitaph are very famous with a very extensive bibliography; most recently see the articles of Kropp 2006 and Zwettler 2006, which refer to much of the earlier literature. For the suggestion that *al-‘arab* is here a geographical rather than an ethnic entity see Zwettler 1993: 3–37; see also Retsö 2003: 447–8, who makes the point that ‘the word itself can hardly be a place-name from the beginning . . . It is easier to imagine an unchanged gentilic being used as a name for a dwelling than vice versa’ and Shahid 2000: 81–6, who adduces many strong arguments in favour of keeping the ethnic interpretation.

²¹ There is a Ka‘b ibn Ḥāritha of Khuzā’a and one of al-Anṣār (Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara* I, tables 196, 183), both tribes active around Hegra, but it is too ordinary a name to make a positive identification.

²² Healey and Rex Smith 1989: 77–84; Healey 2002: 81–90.

occasion / Though I have often encountered wounding, He has not let it be my destruction.”²³

‘Arabs’ and Saracens

7. *Imru’ al-Qays ibn ‘Amr, as above (if the reading ‘king of all the Arabs’ is to be preferred).*

10. *Rufinus of Qanawat*

Date: Third century (based on palaeographical criteria).²⁴

Language: Greek.

Provenance: The Aegean island of Thasos.

Type: Epitaph.

‘Rufinus, bird-augurer, Arab (*ho araps*),²⁵ of the city of Septimian Kanotha, for his son Germanus.’

11. *A pagan female phylarch of Anasartha*

Date: 319/20 CE (dated).

Language: Greek.

Provenance: Anasartha, a polis south-east of Aleppo.

Type: Epitaph.

‘phylarch of the Saracens’.²⁶

12. *Vincentius, chief of a bodyguard*

Date: 334 CE (dated).

Language: Latin.

Provenance: c. 30 miles east of Mafraq, modern north Jordan.

Type: Building text.

‘Vincentius... observing that many of the outlying pickets had been ambushed and killed by Saracens while fetching water for themselves, laid out and constructed a reservoir for the water.’²⁷

²³ The exact meaning of this text is unsure, but the many scholars who have studied it all agree that it is to some degree metrical (hence the rhyme in my translation); most recently see Hackl, Jenni and Schneider *Quellen*: 396–402, which lists earlier literature thereon.

²⁴ See Robert 1946: 43–50.

²⁵ It is assumed that the reason why Rufinus calls himself an Arab, though he is writing in Greek and living on a Greek island, is that he was from the province of Arabia, on the border of which lay the city of Kanotha (modern Qanawat). See discussion below.

²⁶ Found and to be published by Marc Griesheimer; for the reference and more on Anasartha see Feissel 2002: 220, n. 112 (unless there is confusion here with the fifth-century Greek inscription on a martyrion in Anasartha dedicated by one Sylvanus to his recently deceased daughter, who was the wife of a phylarch; see *IGLS* II 168–70).

²⁷ Iliffe 1942: 62–4.

THE INTERPRETATION

It would seem, then, from the evidence of these inscriptions that a number of changes were afoot in the third–fourth centuries. Obviously, it is a cliché that the third century was a time of upheaval for the Roman Empire – ‘the crisis of the third century’ even gets its own entry in wikipedia.com – so I do not want to point out the obvious to those who are much more knowledgeable about such things than I. What I would like to consider here is those events that might elucidate, or be elucidated by, these three new phenomena in the epigraphic record that I have highlighted above (i.e. Arab kings/Arab tribes, Arabic inscriptions, the term Saracen)

*Greater involvement of ‘Arabs’ in the imperial system*²⁸

Rome’s struggle with a re-energised Iranian Empire led by the Sasanian dynasty (inaugurated in 224 CE) meant that it had an increased need for military manpower and allies. Peripheral peoples were thus incorporated within the Empire in larger numbers, and consequently they could negotiate with Rome on better terms. There was, therefore, a difference between the various ‘barbarian chieftains and their bands’ who had participated in the Empire in earlier times in a subordinate position and the ‘new peoples’ (such as Goths, Franks, and Alamanni in the west) who feature in the third/fourth century as major players.²⁹ For the east it has been noted that there was a change from local exchanges between Roman officials and nomads in frontier areas in the first to third centuries CE to ‘the formal alliances of the late Empire with major Saracen tribal groupings’.³⁰ ‘Whereas during the first three centuries... they are mentioned only incidentally as exotic barbarians, from the fourth century onwards every author who discusses the eastern wars or every source of a local nature... refers to the Saracens as a factor of importance’.³¹ This

²⁸ I assume this to be true for both the Roman and the Sasanian Empires, but the dearth of sources for the latter means that I will have to concentrate on the Romans.

²⁹ Wolfram 1990: 38–44. Cf. Heather and Matthews 1991: 1–2: ‘such recruitment [of Goths in the Roman army in the third century] is probably a sign that the movement of Goths and other peoples south and east from central Europe into the northern hinterland of the Roman empire was already under way by the beginning of the third century. These movements eventually precipitated conflicts not only between Goths and Romans, but also between Goths and other tribal peoples’; Lee 1993: 27: ‘These peoples were therefore gradually acquiring the characteristics of states... and were developing the ability to organize themselves so as to pose more serious threats to the Roman empire than had been the case prior to the third century.’

³⁰ Millar *Roman Near East*: 430.

³¹ Isaac 1990: 235; cf. Sartre 1982b: 134: ‘Un phénomène nouveau dans notre documentation est digne d’attention. Alors que les nomades dont nous avons parlé jusqu’ici étaient plus ou moins

is documented by Grouchevoy in an exhaustive examination of the term 'phylarch', demonstrating 'the transformation of "phylarch" from a neutral word [i.e. just meaning head of a tribe or local potentate] into the title of a functionary in the ranks of the Byzantine administrative hierarchy'.³² And this fits well with Heather's assertion that 'by the fourth century the essence of imperial defence... lay in managing an inner core of client kingdoms that, in practice, were integrated into a late Roman imperial system'.³³ He speaks of 'an inner belt of client kings', those who belonged more inside the Empire than outside it, who could be called upon to provide military and economic support, and who had become to some extent Romanised and active in the affairs of the Empire. In short, 'a whole range of political, social, cultural and economic ties worked across the fortified lines to tie barbarian client kingdoms into a Roman-dominated imperial system'.

Most work on this has been done for the western part of the Empire, but I think one could plausibly argue that there were similar developments taking place on the eastern front.³⁴ Certainly, as early as the fourth century there were 'Arab' leaders who had close dealings with the imperial powers, in particular king Imru' al-Qays (fl. 320s) and queen Mawiya (fl. 370s). The latter's tribal following are explicitly described as having treaty relations with Rome (*hypospoudoi*), and though she first appears in our sources as devastating the eastern provinces over non-payment of subsidies and the appointment of a bishop, she shows herself to be at home within the Empire, renewing the Roman alliance once her requests are granted, and even giving her daughter in marriage to a *magister militum* called Victor.³⁵ Imru' al-Qays must be placed in the context of the dealings between Himyar and Iran. Shammār Yuhar'ish, who unified all south Arabia under the rule of the kingdom of Himyar, sent an envoy to the Persians (inscription no. 4 above), seeking closer ties between his realm and the Iranian Empire. The reason for this was almost certainly that he wished to counter south Arabia's archenemy Axum, which was backed by Rome. Imru' al-Qays boasts that he led a successful campaign against

anonymes... désormais des noms de chefs émergent.' In part this is because, having disbanded the numerous client states on their eastern borders (Nabataea, Palmyra, Commagene, etc), 'Rome became responsible for the policing and control of the steppe' and so acquired more direct knowledge of steppe peoples (Kennedy 1999: 81).

³² Grouchevoy 1995: 120. ³³ Heather 2001: 32.

³⁴ One should also note that the South Arabian kingdom of Himyar was also struggling during the fourth century to incorporate various 'Arab' groups within its state structures, as is clear from the expansion of the royal titlature by 430 CE to include 'the Arabs of the Highlands and the Coast' ('*rb Ṭwd w-Ṭhmt*).

³⁵ Basic story given in Tringham 1979: 96–100.

Shammar in the area of Najran and, though the exact sense is unclear, he mentions allegiance to Rome.³⁶ This would seem confirmed by the location of Imru' al-Qays' inscription (no. 7 above), only seventy miles south-east of Damascus and within a short distance of the Roman military outpost of Nemara. In this case, Imru' al-Qays' campaign is likely to have been at the instigation of Rome, an attempt to reduce the influence of Shammar. Subsequently, in the 340s, king Ezana in Axum (Ethiopia) commissioned inscriptions in which he adopted elements of the titulature of the Himyarite monarchy, implying that the kings of Axum laid claim to the Himyarite throne as well. Though a detailed account of these events eludes us, it would seem certain that they form part of a struggle between Rome and Iran to gain influence in the Red Sea region and that various Arab groups were embroiled in this struggle.³⁷

By the sixth century, with the struggle between the two great powers at its height, attempts to manipulate the 'Arabs' to imperial advantage were intensive:

At that time, when Ella Asbeha was reigning over the Ethiopians and Esimiphaeus over the Himyarites, the emperor Justinian (527–65) sent an ambassador, Julianus, demanding that both nations on account of their community of religion should make common cause with the Romans in the war against the Persians. For he purposed that the Ethiopians, by purchasing silk from India and selling it among the Romans, might themselves gain much money, while causing the Romans to profit in only one way, namely that they be no longer compelled to pay over their money to their enemy . . . As for the Himyarites, it was desired that they should *establish Qays, the fugitive, as chief over Ma'add*, and with a great army of their own people and of the Ma'add Saracens make an invasion into the land of the Persians.

Mundhir, holding the position of king, ruled alone over all the Saracens in Persia, and he was always able to make his inroad with the whole army wherever he wished in the Roman domain. Neither any commander of Roman troops, whom they call *duces*, nor any leader of the Saracens allied with the Romans, who are called *phylarchs*, was strong enough with his men to array himself against Mundhir, for the troops stationed in the different districts were not a match (individually) in battle for the enemy. For this reason *the emperor Justinian (527–65) put in command of as many clans as possible al-Hārith the son of Jabala*, who ruled over the Saracens of Arabia, and bestowed upon him the dignity of king (*basileus*), a thing which among the Romans had never been done before.³⁸

³⁶ See the strong arguments in favour of this reading in Shahid 1984–2002: 86–91.

³⁷ For the Ezana inscription and some discussion see Retsö 2003: 472–3.

³⁸ Procopius, *History of the Wars* 1.17 (Dewing 1914) (italics mine).

As regards the expressions 'establish as chief' and 'put in command of', Justinian obviously did not have the authority to do this himself. Presumably what is meant is that he undertook such measures as announcing that he would henceforth deal with the tribes only through al-Ḥārith as well as giving him money and this title of 'king' so as to raise his standing among the tribes, making it easier for him to recruit among them and exercise his command.

This augmented 'Arab' role in imperial affairs has been portrayed by some scholars in terms of a 'nomadic menace' that assumed greater proportions in the third–fourth centuries.³⁹ This is, however, just the flip side to the 'Arabs' having a greater presence in the imperial system and greater military strength. If they felt they were being treated badly, they could, as Mawiya illustrated, translate their frustration into action, and pose a significant threat to internal security. Yet, as we can see from her reconciliation with Rome and from the many Greek inscriptions of leaders of Ghassān,⁴⁰ they wanted to be a part of the Roman world, to improve their lot within it, not to destroy it.

A further ramification of this debate is whether it was improvements in means of transport that furthered this enhanced role of the 'Arabs' in the third–fourth centuries. It was once argued that the use of a particular type of camel saddle enabled the Bedouin of this time to fight more effectively on camel back, but this was rejected when it was pointed out that this type of saddle was already known to nomads by the first century CE and that in any case Bedouin mostly used camels only to get to and from a battle, and rode on horses, or fought on foot, in the battle itself.⁴¹ This argument has been revived of late with the amendment that 'only when these nomadic herdsmen, by employing pack-camels, managed also to lead horses along on their raids did they become a serious menace to the Romans and Sasanians', the assumption being that Bedouin only got hold of horses around the third century CE.⁴² But this too has been shown to be false, as graffiti by nomads of the first century BCE/CE sometimes comprise hunting and raiding scenes involving horses.⁴³ In addition to this, it misses the point that the Romans were deliberately arming the

³⁹ Much has been written on this subject; see Hoyland 2001: 96–103, which gives an overview and the most relevant literature (on pp. 288–90).

⁴⁰ Listed and discussed in Hoyland 2007a, and in much greater detail by Shahid 1984–2002: vol. III.

⁴¹ Macdonald 1991: 103; see also Zwettler 2000: 279–80.

⁴² Kuhnen 1991: 332, who also summarises and gives references for the earlier theory of Walter Dostal about the new camel saddle. Kuhnen is supported by Zwettler 2000: 281–5.

⁴³ Macdonald 1996: esp. 73 and n. 6.

tribes, increasingly employing them as units in the imperial army and entrusting them with the management of the frontier regions, and that many of them were in varying degrees Romanised. In other words, it is no longer (if it ever was) a question of Romans on one side of a border facing 'the ever present danger of Arab penetration' from the other.⁴⁴

Movements of tribes

The point has been made that 'Arab tribal or collective names that were recorded in ESA [Epigraphic South Arabian] inscriptions, dating mostly from the late second to the sixth centuries CE, can be identified by and large with the names of major tribes or confederations featured in the *ayyām*-accounts [Muslim accounts of pre-Islamic 'Arab' battles] and genealogical lore of medieval Islamic scholarship... In contrast, almost none of the tribes named in the ENA [Epigraphic North Arabian] graffiti and inscriptions can be connected with certainty to a correspondingly named group in the Arab-Islamic historico-genealogical tradition.'⁴⁵ For example, among some 20,000 ENA graffiti of the type known as Safaitic, only two group names are easily identifiable with names of tribes cited in Muslim sources, namely Ṭayyī' and Ḥawāla.⁴⁶ And they are in any case

⁴⁴ Gichon 1986: 584–5.

⁴⁵ Zwettler 2000: 278; ENA graffiti refers to informal inscriptions found in their thousands on rocks of the southern Levant and north-west Arabia, written in a variant of the south Arabian script, but in one of the pre-Islamic north Arabian dialects of this region (known to modern scholars, for a variety of accidental reasons, by such names as Safaitic, Hismaic, Thamudic etc.; see Macdonald 2000 and Macdonald 2004 (who prefers the term ANA/Ancient North Arabian)). Note that Zwettler's point is true also of the Greek inscriptions of the area where ENA texts are found; see Sartre 1982a: 77–91, and MacAdam 1986: chapter 3: 'Tribal and clan names in the Greek Inscriptions from Provincia Arabia'.

⁴⁶ One might argue that most of the authors of the ENA texts are in their home territory, and so only give the name of the immediate clan or cousin/*ibn* 'amm section, which was unknown to Muslim genealogists. By contrast, the members of Ṭayyī' and Ḥawāla featuring in these texts are outside their home base and so the larger grouping to which they belong is stated (Macdonald 1993: 367). However, this argument is weakened by the fact that some Safaitic graffiti are found far outside their core area (e.g. in Dura Europos and Lebanon), while some group names feature frequently and in very diverse locations, so that larger groupings are likely to be included among the group names of the Safaitic texts (see Macdonald 1993: 304 on distribution of the texts; Harding 1969 for listings of the frequency and place of occurrence of group names; and Millar *Roman Near East*: 428–30 for the diverse locations of texts of the 'Ubayshat and 'Amrat groups). The situation is complicated by the fact that there seems to be only one commonly used word in ENA to designate a group (though one might denote group identity in other ways, e.g. in Safaitic by a nisba), namely *ʾl* (cf. Arabic *āl*), which makes it impossible for us to be sure what size of group is intended. Note that Ḥawāla are subsumed under al-As/zd by Muslim genealogists (e.g. Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara*: I, table 209); they are possibly to be identified with Strabo's Chaulotaeans (from Eratosthenes) and Pliny's Avalitae, whose cities were Duma and Hegra (Macdonald 1993: 308, n. 36).

outsiders, as is obvious from the way in which they are referred to by the authors of these texts.⁴⁷

One expert in Safaitic makes the same point, namely that, besides the Ṭayyi' and the Ḥawāla, 'the earliest [Muslim] Arab writers make no mention of any of the about 136 [group] names as being those of tribes in this area or, for that matter, elsewhere'.⁴⁸ What are we to make of this?⁴⁹

⁴⁷ For example:

By Tm son of Ḥlš son of 'h'rb son of Msk son of Z'n son of Šrb son of Ġlmt son of 'bd. And he was anxious for his companions who were raiding the people (ʾl) of Ṭayyi'. And so, o Lat and Gd-'wd, (grant) vengeance on Ṭayyi' (C2795).

By Nqm son of Rs[n] of the people (ʾl) of '[ty]. And he grieved for [Sy]d, killed by Ṭayyi'. And so, o Lat and Dushara, (grant) revenge (CSNS1011).

By Swd son of M'n, and his is the cairn, killed by Ṭayyi' wretchedly. And so, o Dushara, (grant) revenge (CSNS1046).

By Šby son of Hmnt son of Msk son of Z'n son of Šrb son of Ġlmt. And he camped in this place while escaping from the Romans (? *hrm*) and the horsemen of Ḥwlt, and so, o Gd-whb'l, (grant) deliverance (C1713).

By Dr'l son of 'ty son of Bñnh son of Wdm'l. And he waited for his brother whom Ḥwlt had captured, and so, o Lat, (grant) return (C2552).

By Šmt son of 'bd son of Ġt son of Šrk son of Skrn. And he escaped from Ḥwlt. And so, o Lat, (grant) security to the one who lets remain this inscription but blind the one who destroys it (WH153).

By Šddt son of 'd. And he expelled Ḥwlt and restrained them and shepherded (WH1231).

By 'mr son of S'd son of Šbh son of Rdh son of Ḥzl. And he feared Ḥwlt (WH2360).

Note that there is one Safaitic text by a person of Ḥawāla who notes his tribal affiliation (*hn-hwly*; cf. CSNS 661: By Drb son of Qn *b-nbt*/the Nabataean) and one Hismaic one (*d-l Ḥwlt*); see Macdonald 1993: 308 and n. 34.

⁴⁸ Harding 1969: 22; on pages 20–1 he lists twenty-one names (excluding Ḥawāla and Ṭayyi') out of 136 'as candidates for tribal status', but notes that not one of these can be identified for sure with tribes known to Muslim genealogists. There may be the odd exception to this, but they are so rare that they are clearly just the exception that proves the rule. One plausible exception is Alma', mentioned in a Safaitic graffito of the Jawf area of northern Arabia, which is very likely the Alma' ibn 'Amr tribe of 'Adi ibn Ḥāritha, which, significantly, were seen by Muslim genealogists to be settled in the area of the Sarat mountain range of western Arabia/Jordan before the migrations of al-As'ad; see al-Theeb 2003: no. 1, and Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara* 1, table 202.

⁴⁹ The point applies also to the ENA dialects called by modern scholars Hismaic and Thamudic, though group designations are rarer in these texts: only twenty-three are listed in King 1990: appendix 6; only eighteen listed in the indices of S. 'A. al-Theeb's books (see bibliography). None of these latter can be identified for sure with tribes recorded by Muslim genealogists, but it is tempting to relate *mzn* (three occurrences listed in King 1990: appendix 6, and one in al-Theeb 1999: index) to the Māzin ibn Kalb, said to be of Jurhum (who belonged to the 'first Arabs' – see below – and were active in the region of the Hijaz), and possibly also to the *mzn* of Dedan (Abū l-Ḥasan 1997: no. 92), but it is perhaps a step too far to link them with the *alimazoneis/amazoneis/banizomeneis* of various Greek sources (Septuagint chronicler,

Was there a substantial change in population in this region? Certainly, a number of the 'Arab' groups recorded in ESA texts in southern/central Arabia appear later in north Arabia and Syria/Iraq as though they have migrated to this latter region. Thus Ghassān are in central Arabia in the period 260–360 (see no. 3 above; and already in the second century if they can be identified with the Kassanitae in Ptolemy's *Geography*), and then they defeat the Salīḥ tribe to become the chief allies of Rome in Syria by the sixth century (see below). So were these 'Arab' groups that entered into imperial service in Syro-Mesopotamia in the fourth–sixth centuries coming from southern/central Arabia, as Zwettler implies?

The answer must in some measure be yes, as is illustrated by the following example:

(The tribe of) Salīḥ would tax those of Mudar and other Arab tribes who settled in their territory on behalf of the Romans. Ghassān approached in a great multitude heading for Syria and then settled in it. Salīḥ said to them: 'If you agree to pay the tax you can stay, if not we will fight you.' Ghassān refused and so Salīḥ fought and defeated them... The chief of Ghassān at that time was Tha'laba ibn 'Amr... They (Salīḥ) continued to tax them (Ghassān) until Jidh' ibn 'Amr of Ghassān killed the tax collector of Salīḥ... Then Salīḥ called one another to arms, as did Ghassān, and they engaged at a place called Muhaffaf, and Ghassān destroyed them. The ruler of the Romans feared that they would side with Iran against him, so he sent to Tha'laba saying: 'You are a very courageous and numerous people and you have destroyed this tribe who were the most vigorous and numerous of the Arabs. I now appoint you in their place and shall write an agreement between us and you: if a raiding party of Arabs raid you I will support you with 40,000 armed Roman soldiers, and if a raiding party of Arabs raid us then you must provide 20,000 soldiers, and you must not interfere between us and the Iranians.'⁵⁰

However, one would not wish to suggest a crude model of replacement of one people by another, and so it is useful to bear in mind a number of caveats. First, one should recognise, of course, that languages and scripts

Agatharchides of Cnidus, Diodorus Siculus; references in Retsö 2003: 298), although the location is right.

⁵⁰ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar* 370–1; cf. Ḥamza, *Tārīkh* 99, who specifies that the Byzantine ruler was Nṣṭwrs, and al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh* 1.233 and 235, who specifies Nushar, most likely Anastasius (491–518). Regarding the last point in this passage, compare the clause in the Byzantine–Persian peace treaty of 561 CE, which stipulated that the Saracen allies 'of the Persians should not arm themselves against the Romans nor those of the Romans against the Persians', presumably aiming to stop superpower conflicts arising from inter-Arab fighting (see Kavar 1956: 181–213). Cf. Malchus, *Byzantine History*, fr. 1 (Blockley 1983), who gives the story of a certain Amorkesus (presumably the 'Arab' name Imru' al-Qays) who leaves the service of the Persians with his 'tribe of Nomalius' and manages to become a phylarch of the Romans through the military prowess displayed by himself and his tribesmen.

can be borrowed and learnt, so there would have been no necessary and immutable link between the ENA and ESA languages and scripts and specific ethnic groups.⁵¹ Second, one must bear in mind that these ENA texts are all graffiti,⁵² which are less likely to contain statements about status and identity than texts of a more formal nature, such as the ESA texts that mention 'Arab' kings and tribes (e.g. nos. 1–4 above, and cf. nos. 5–7).⁵³ Third, the idea of large-scale migrations of peoples has fallen out of favour,⁵⁴ and this is a good thing inasmuch as the once widespread idea of Arabia as 'a vast human reservoir' pouring forth waves of tribal settlers into the Fertile Crescent is not a plausible or helpful one.⁵⁵ Rather we should perhaps think in terms of more frequent movements of smaller groups within the arid areas of the Syro-Arabian landmass for a variety of purposes, such as pasture, water, trade, booty, employment, etc.⁵⁶

These caveats aside, the idea of some form of movements of certain tribal groups does seem to fit the evidence, both the epigraphic and the literary (such as the notice about Ghassān quoted above). It might also help explain the substantial increase in economic activity throughout the border regions of the Levant in the fourth–sixth centuries that all experts now agree took place: 'All evidence points to the same conclusion, that in

⁵¹ One should likewise be wary of the idea, once very popular and still adduced quite often, that migrations from Arabia to the Levant and Fertile Crescent are discernible in the epigraphic record via an increase in 'Arab'/Arabic names (discussion and examples given in Macdonald 1998 and Macdonald 2003). This is usually stated with little regard for what might constitute an 'Arab'/Arabic name as opposed to a Semitic name in general, and for whether that would in any case necessarily mean that its bearer was an 'Arab' (whatever that might have signified at the time of the inscription's engraving).

⁵² The one famous exception is the text on the temple at Rawwafa in north-west Arabia in honour of the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (165–9 CE), which, though not an ENA text (it is a Greek/Aramaic inscription), is by a north Arabian tribe, the *ethnos/shrket* of Thamud. Text and discussion given in Hackl, Jenni and Schneider *Quellen*: 295–300. Macdonald 1995 argues convincingly that one should understand by *ethnos/shrket* a military unit drawn from the tribe of Thamud rather than the tribe itself, which would better account for their construction of a temple in honour, and with the support, of Roman authorities. Of course, Thamud are known to Muslim genealogists, as are 'Ad, who are also mentioned in the context of the construction of a temple in north-west Arabia (Zayadine and Farès-Drappeau 1998: 255–8), both as tribes of the 'first Arabs' (see below).

⁵³ Yet the odd south Arabian tribal leader did boast of his status in graffiti, such as 'Hujr son of 'Amr king of Kinda' (Gajda 1996: pl. I).

⁵⁴ For an excellent discussion of its problems with regard to the Slavs see Curta 2001, which also reviews much earlier literature on this issue.

⁵⁵ An image conjured up by Dussaud 1955, and refuted by Macdonald 2003. However, note that migrations of some form are still generally considered to have taken place in the West at the time (and probably as a function) of the end of the Roman Empire (for a recent overview see Halsall 2006).

⁵⁶ And it could go in different directions; thus Kinda extended c. 450–550 into northern Arabia, but subsequently retrenched in the later sixth century in the Hadramawt in Yemen (Lecker 1994: 336).

much of the eastern empire the fifth and sixth centuries saw not only a remarkable rise in the density and geographical spread of settlement, but also a rise in prosperity and in conspicuous expenditure'.⁵⁷ The nature of this boom is still not fully clear, but all again concur that an increase in population surely figures, whether as a cause or an effect (i.e. newcomers attracted by the rise in prosperity) or both. For our purposes, it is important to note that tribal movements help make sense of the three new phenomena occurring in the epigraphic record of the third–fourth-century Middle East that were listed at the beginning of this article, namely:

(a) *'Arab' kings, 'Arab' tribes and the earliest Arab historical memory*

Migrations of 'Arab' tribes from southern Arabia constitute the earliest chapter in the traditional Muslim account of the beginnings of 'Arab' history, which opens with exactly this event, a consequence of some natural disaster or internecine wars. Some tribes, say the Muslim historians, went as far as Syria and Iraq, where they ousted earlier peoples and entered into relations with the Empires of Rome and Iran, as in the text on Salīḥ and Ghassān above, and the following:

The southern tribes were compelled to leave their homes and dispersed in the land. Quḏā'a... were the first to settle in Syria. They allied themselves with the emperors of the Romans, who made them kings, after they had become Christians, over the Arabs who had gathered in Syria.⁵⁸

A number of Arab tribes (who had left southern Arabia) gathered in Bahrain; they became allies known as Tanūkh... and pledged themselves to assist and support one another... These Arabs of Bahrain looked towards the land of Iraq; they were desirous of overpowering the non-Arabs in order to seize the area adjoining Arabia or to share it with them. Taking advantage of the discord among the [Parthian] princes, the Arab chiefs resolved to march to Iraq... Many of Tanūkh settled at Anbar and Hira... The first ruler from among them was Malik ibn Fahm... then his brother 'Amr ibn Fahm... then Jadhīma al-Abrash.⁵⁹

They (the southern 'Arab' tribes) did not enter a land without robbing its people of it. Khuzā'a wrested Mecca from Jurhum; Aws and Khazraj wrested Medina from the Jews; the clan of Mundhir seized Iraq from its people; the clan of Jafna seized Syria from its people and ruled it; and the progeny of 'Imrān ibn 'Amr ibn 'Āmir [of al-As/zd] seized Oman from its people. Up till then all of these [southern tribes] had been in obedience to the kings of Himyar.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ward-Perkins 2001: 168, citing other literature. ⁵⁸ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* 3.214–15.

⁵⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 1.746–49; cf. Ptol. *Geog.* 6.7 (ed. K. F. A. Nobbe). He speaks of *Thanuitae* in Bahrain, generally accepted to be a reference to Tanukh.

⁶⁰ Al-Asma'i, *Tārīkh al-'arab* 88.

This is then invariably followed by a section on the kings of the 'Arabs' in Iraq and Syria, which always includes: king Jadhīma of Tanūkh, king 'Amr ibn 'Adī of Lakhm and king Imru' al-Qays son of 'Amr ibn 'Adī.⁶¹ Since the timeframe is right, it seems all but certain that these are to be identified with the men of the same names in inscriptions nos. 5–7 above. However, it must be borne in mind that the Arabic reports are not plain historical narratives, but rather of an epic and legendary nature, full of seductions, ambushes, eloquent speeches and heroic battles. For example, Jadhīma kills 'Amr son of Zārib, head of a dynasty that controlled eastern Syria and parts of Mesopotamia for the Romans, father of the beautiful, clever and courageous Zabbā who becomes queen after him and avenges his death by luring Jadhīma into her palace with promises of marriage. She is then herself killed by a Trojan horse-style ruse (men hidden in the saddlebags of camels) executed by the faithful adviser to Jadhīma, now in the employ of the latter's nephew 'Amr son of 'Adī. And on the basis of this tale modern scholars build their knowledge of Roman–'Arab' history, arguing, for instance, that 'the Tanūkh emerge as the consolidated enemies of Palmyra; and when Zenobia decided, after her husband's death,⁶² to revolt against the Roman authorities, her action was as much an assault upon her Arab neighbours as it was a defection from the government in Italy'.⁶³

Nevertheless, though the details may be hazy, the general fact that (Muslim) Arab historical memory begins with the movements of these tribes and the careers of these kings does seem significant. The link with Zenobia is interesting for two reasons. First, the demise of Palmyra would certainly have left a power vacuum in that region, and it is plausible that the contest between Jadhīma/'Amr ibn 'Adī and Zabbā told in the Arabic sources is a mythical portrayal of the events surrounding that demise and the struggle between groups competing to fill the vacuum. Second, Zabbā is connected in the Arabic accounts with 'the first Arabs' (*al-'arab al-'āriba [al-ūlā]*), who are distinguished from the newcomers who replaced them, the Arabised Arabs (*al-'arab al-musta'riba* or *muta'arriba*, those 'making themselves Arab' or 'seeking to be Arab'). Thus her army 'consisted of remnants of the 'Amālīq and of the first Arabs'.⁶⁴ Again, it is tempting to

⁶¹ E.g. al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* 1.234–46; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* 1.745–771; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* 3.181–99.

⁶² Thus in the Greco-Roman sources (i.e. Odenathus), as opposed to her father (i.e. 'Amr ibn Zārib) in most Arabic sources where she is portrayed as a virgin queen. For a discussion of the Arabic versions see Piotrovskij 1970: 170–84.

⁶³ Bowersock *Arabia*: 132; more recently see Sartre *Alexandre*: 984–90.

⁶⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* 1.757. The two groups are, however, much commingled in this early period; e.g. among the migrating tribes were 'the Banū Liḥyān (a people who ruled Dedan and its environs

see in this a mythical representation of the political–historical situation, though of course a simplified/schematic one: the movement of some tribal groups from southern/central Arabia into Syro-Mesopotamia and their interaction with tribal groups already there. The Muslim Arab historical memory of this period is remarkably accurate with respect to genealogy (e.g. a Tha‘laba b. Salūl chief of Iyad is mentioned in a south Arabian inscription of the mid-fourth century CE and in Muslim genealogical works),⁶⁵ which suggests that there is some degree of continuity between the tribal groups of the third–fourth century and their homonyms of the seventh–eighth century.

It seems reasonable to connect this latter point with the earlier one about increased ‘Arab’ involvement in the imperial system. Thus we might conclude that (Muslim) Arab historical recollection begins in the third–fourth century because it is then that the (political groups known as) tribes that joined the Muslim community were *constituted*, and this was in response to/a result of the imperial policies that increasingly impinged upon the ‘Arabs’ from that time onwards. The degree to which they were the same people as before in different political constellations or new arrivals or a mixture of both is unclear, but in any case they formed the political entities that went on to participate in the rise of Islam and the Muslim conquests. The tribes of north Arabia/Syro-Mesopotamia before that period were in different formations, reflecting a different political reality, and so the tribal map of Muhammad’s time has to be understood in terms of the interaction between Rome/Iran⁶⁶ and this region from the third century onwards. The increased literacy evidenced by inscriptions, and the rise in the use of Arabic in particular (e.g. nos. 7–9 above), would be part and parcel of the same development, a result of increased contact with a bureaucratic empire.⁶⁷ Possibly the historical memory evidenced above was facilitated by records that began at this time, whether kept by outsiders because these ‘Arab’ tribes had

c. third to first centuries BCE), who were a remnant of Jurhum (of the first Arabs), and it is even said that ‘Jadhīma al-Abrash was from among the first Arabs, of the Banū Wabar (a mythical town in southern Arabia frequented by another tribe of the first Arabs, Umaym) ... and he raided the dwellings of Ṭasm and Jadīs (of the first Arabs) in Jaww (= Yamāma in north-east Arabia)’ (*Ṭa’rikh* 1.749–50; see further Retsö 2003: 34–40).

⁶⁵ Robin and Gajda 1994: 1, line 14; e.g. Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara* I, table 174; the patronymic is rare enough to make homonymy highly unlikely.

⁶⁶ As I said in n. 28 above, a lack of evidence makes it difficult to determine Iran’s role, but the fact that it exercised substantial influence in eastern and southern Arabia and cultivated a number of Arab client tribes means that it must also have affected the socio-political situation in Arabia.

⁶⁷ Nos. 7 and 9 above in particular hint at a developed literary culture behind them; see Hoyland 2007b. More generally see Heather 1994a and Lee 1993.

become important enough to have their deeds noted,⁶⁸ or kept by themselves because they had now acquired sufficient literacy. Plausibly the two phenomena are related, that is, clans that became powerful wanted to record/manipulate their genealogies for political ends and enshrined this in texts.⁶⁹

(b) *The disappearance of ENA and the rise of Arabic*

ENA inscriptions mention Romans and Nabataeans, but never allude to any aspect of Christianity/Christians (even though they frequently call upon deities), and so it is assumed that they peter out around the third–fourth century. Interestingly, this is when Arabic texts start to appear in this area (nos. 7–8 above are located at either end of the region where most ENA texts are located, i.e. southern Syria to northern Arabia). Now, it is in south central Arabia that the very earliest (Old) Arabic texts have been discovered (c. first–second century CE), particularly around the city of Qaryat al-Faw in south central Arabia, the base of the tribes of Kinda and Qaḥṭan.⁷⁰ Plausibly, then, the southern/central Arabian tribes that subsequently went to the Syrian desert area made their dialect dominant in this region, by virtue of their greater success in attaining political power, and it is their dialect that went on to form the basis of classical Arabic. The Arabic texts from Qaryat al-Faw were written in south Arabian script, the script of prestige in that area, but in northern Arabia/southern Syria it was the Nabataean Aramaic script that was more prestigious, and so it was in this script that Arabic came to be written. Constant writing of Arabic in Nabataean Aramaic script led to the gradual evolution of the latter until, by the sixth century, we witness the emergence of what looks recognisably like what we call the Arabic script. The most likely reason for this ‘constant writing’ was that Arabic was used by the client tribes

⁶⁸ Note Ibn al-Kalbī's claim to be using church records (see n. 18 above) and the reference of a mid-seventh-century chronicler in south-west Iran to ‘the city of Hira, which was the seat of king Mundar, surnamed the “warrior”, who was sixth in the line of the Ishmaelite kings’ (reference and discussion in Hoyland *Islam*: 188). This does not at all preclude the continuation of oral tradition alongside the written record, and indeed the colourfulness of the tales about Jadhima, Zenobia and numerous other figures of ‘Arab’ history implies an oral component in the composition/transmission of this material.

⁶⁹ Though it relates to southern Arabia, it is interesting to note that al-Ḥamdānī (d. 970s) used written sources in compiling reports (*akhbār*) about the men of Khawlān and Ḥimyar, which he says, came in part from a register (*siḡill*) passed down among them from the pre-Islamic period/*jāhiliyya* (*Ikhl* 1 75).

⁷⁰ See Robin 1991: 113–26 and 71–88 (esp. 74–7: ‘Critères pour identifier les tribus arabes’). As well as wholly Arabic texts, he discusses Arabic elements in ESA texts, such as the terms ‘*ashīra*/tribe’, ‘*all*/clan or lineage’ and nomads/*a'rāb*, and the use of the definite article *al* in personal and tribal names (e.g. nos. 2–4 above and the Elisaroi – al-Ash'ar – of Ptolemy's *Geography*).

of Rome, as is suggested by an inscription in Arabic language and script from Jabal Says, which records the instruction to a small guard unit to proceed there by 'the king al-Ḥārith', assumed to be the Ghassanid leader al-Ḥārith ibn Jabala.⁷¹

(c) *'Arabs' and Saracens*

Greco-Roman authors had applied the term 'Arab' to a host of independent peoples and principalities around the edges of the Syrian steppe and either side of the Euphrates, but as these became absorbed into the Roman Empire during the first–third centuries, the term gradually faded from their writings and came thereafter to be largely restricted to the citizens, probably now overwhelmingly Christian, of the Provincia Arabia (which explains no. 10 above), whereas nomads were now referred to by the term Saracen. Thus a funerary inscription from that province, from the city of Pella (in modern Jordan), dated 522 CE (year 584 of the era of Pompey), refers to two soldiers, both called John, as hailing 'from the lands of the Arab nation' (*apo khōrōn tou Arabōn ethnous*),⁷² and the emperor Justinian, in his *Novella* 102, explicitly speaks of 'the province of the Arabs (*Araborum provincia*)'.⁷³ And it is in this vein that we should understand comments like those of John Cassian (d. c. 435), that some monks killed in the Judaeian desert by Saracens were mourned 'by the whole people of the Arabs' (*a universa plebe Arabum*).⁷⁴ Although the Provincia's borders were redrawn a number of times after its establishment, it was for long equated with the former kingdom of the Nabataeans. For example, Epiphanius of Salamis, writing in the fourth century, describes Petra as being 'the main city of Arabia', even though in his day it was in Palestina III Salutaris (= modern southern Palestine and Jordan). And he says of the Manichaean Scythianus that 'he originated from the *Sarakēnia* and was raised in the borderland of Palestine, that is, in Arabia', evidently again thinking of the old Arabia, now Palestine III.⁷⁵

⁷¹ For some pertinent remarks see Contini 1987 [1990]: 25–77, and Hoyland 2007a and 2007b.

⁷² Smith 1973: 1.188.

⁷³ Schoell and Krall 1954: *Novella* 102. 'Arab' was used in the same way in the East, as a term for inhabitants of the province of 'Arab/Beth 'Arabaye in northern Mesopotamia (cf. Zacharias Rhetor, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2.35 (ed. E. W. Brooks): the city of Dara was built 'to guard the country of the Arabs [*Arabāyē*] from the marauding bands of Persians and Ṭ'ayyāyē'). See further Shahid 1984–2002: 2.192–3, 3.56–9, and Retsö 2003: 505–25.

⁷⁴ 'Collatio sexta: De nece sanctorum', *Patrologia latina* 49.643–4; note the disjunction between the terms Arab and Saracen.

⁷⁵ References given in Retsö 2003: 510.

Epiphanius' reference to *Sarakēnia* reminds us of a change that went hand in hand with this new definition of Arabs as settled inhabitants of Arabia, namely, as mentioned above, the designation of nomads as *Sarakēnoi*/Saracens. These first appear as a tribe in north-west Arabia and Sinai in the second-century *Geography* of Ptolemy (6.7), and, presumably because they were the nomads that the Romans first had to deal with directly after disbanding the kingdom of the Nabataeans, their name came to mean nomads in general, as we see from inscriptions nos. 11–12 above and from Ammianus Marcellinus' references, apropos of the campaign of the emperor Julian in 363, to 'the tent-dwelling Arabs whom we now call Saracens' and 'the tent-dwelling Arabs whom men of later ages call Saracens'.⁷⁶ The same phenomenon can be observed in the Persian sphere of control, where the tribe of Ṭayyī came to provide the generic name for nomads (in Syriac: *Ṭayyāyē*; in Greek: *Taiēnoi*; in Persian: *Tāzīgān*).⁷⁷

Conclusion

One wonders what might have been the consequences for the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula and the Syrian desert of this involvement with the imperial powers over the course of the third–sixth centuries. As noted at the beginning of this article, it is felt by many historians of the west Roman Empire that it was through engagement with Rome that peoples like the Franks and the Slavs came to be nations. For example, we can observe in western peoples a tendency to move towards more unitary leadership:

No less than seven Alamannic kings gathered their men to fight Julian at the battle of Strasbourg in 357; they were also accompanied by ten princes. The narratives of Julian's operations across the Rhine subsequently, and in the next two years, confirm both the great number of Alamannic kings and the fact that they ruled their own geographical areas more or less autonomously, at least to the extent of making their own treaties with the Roman state. This much is clear,

⁷⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, 22.15.1, 23.6.13 (ed. and tr. J.C. Rolfe). There have been various explanations of the name Saracen, such as easterners (*šarqīyyīn*), plunderers (*sāriqīn*), inhabitants of barren lands (from the Aramaic root *srq*), confederates (from *šrkt*); but it seems simpler to assume it began as the name of a tribe, as with Ṭayyāyē and a number of examples in the west of the Roman Empire; for a resumé of these ideas and a different suggestion see Macdonald 1995: 93–101.

⁷⁷ An early testimony to this change in terminology is Bardaisan's *Book of the Laws of Countries*, written shortly before 240 CE, which enumerates a series of lands where there is no visible trace of the alleged influence of the constellations, among them 'the region of the Ṭayyāyē and Saracens' (p. 50). In the 290s a panegyricist lauds Diocletian's response to 'the chains of captivity of the *Sarracenum*' (*Panegyrici latini* vol. 3, 11.5.4 (ed. R.A.B. Mynors)).

but some later – fifth- and sixth-century – sources refer to an overall king of the Alamanni, so that debate has centred on when and if such a figure emerged. In the pages of Ammian, however, it is very striking that the cluster of fourth-century Alamannic kings and princes already shows a tendency to throw up from among their number, one figure more powerful than the rest.⁷⁸

And in the case of the Goths we can see the gradual emergence of the kingdoms of the Visigoths and Ostrogoths out of a multiplicity of smaller units.⁷⁹ The impetus for this probably came more from the barbarians, a result of their wish for greater bargaining power and of the competition amongst their leaders for greater prestige and status, for in general Roman emperors would not have wished to create super-kings. Such increased power and authority among barbarians would mean that they could extract greater concessions/better terms from their masters, which, if not met, could lead to more devastating raids and even more serious challenges. Justinian's move to 'put in command of as many clans as possible al-Hārith the son of Jabala' and 'to bestow upon him the dignity of king' was therefore probably bred of necessity, and it is significant that the emperor Maurice cancelled the arrangement and 'the kingdom of the Arabs was shared out amongst fifteen chiefs'.⁸⁰ But such actions may have left a more lasting legacy, and it is tempting to connect it with the emergence of ever larger groupings among the Arabs in late antiquity, culminating in the appearance of the two great factions of the Qays and the Yemen in early Islamic times, which led to a substantial merging of groups that were once very distinct.⁸¹

One also wonders how the social structure of the various Arab tribes was affected by their dealings with the Empires. Certainly, it would seem that as they became more powerful, ruling clans would rely less and less on their own tribesmen for military support and turn increasingly to outside recruits, in the process bringing together very diverse

⁷⁸ Heather 2001: 42; cf. Heather 1997: 74: 'It is quite clear that by the sixth century at the latest *foederati* had taken on a quite different significance, designating new groups held in a more equal and favourable relationship with the Roman state.'

⁷⁹ Heather 1991. ⁸⁰ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 2.350–51 (= Chabot 1899–1910).

⁸¹ Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara* I, 33–35; Crone 1994 (she labels them tribally-inspired military factions). For example, Nizār and Ma'add are evidently separate entities in the Nemara inscription (no. 7 above), but are combined in Islamic times by making Nizār the son of Ma'add (note the assertion of Zwettler 2000: 284 that 'the pre-Islamic sources... give no hint that before the seventh century Ma'add was thought to designate an eponymous ancestor or genealogical figure of any kind. And... there is no sound evidence that Ma'add has ever been used... to designate a "tribe" or "confederation" as such'). Zwettler 2000: 286–9 gives further examples. Note also the mid-sixth-century *bā'iyya* (poem of al-Akhnas ibn Shihāb (Lyll 1918: no. 41) that lists Ghassān, Lakhm, Kalb and Bahrā' (i.e. southern Arabs according to Muslim genealogists) as members of Ma'add (i.e. northern Arabs according to Muslim genealogists).

groups. Thus we read that Mundhir ibn al-Hārith (569–81) obtained gold from the emperor Justin in order to hire mercenary troops, and also that the Lakhmid king Nu'mān (580–602) was presented with 'two bodies of troops by the Persian emperor, one called *Dawsar*, these being from Tanūkh, and the other called the radiant ones (*al-shaba*), these being Persians'.⁸² And we hear of a king of Ghassān who 'waged war and summoned to his aid the roving bands who have no camels of their own to guard and defend'.⁸³ But for this reason, that they did not solely rely on their tribal followings in battle, these leaders and their clans were often mocked and satirised:

Ghassān is a tribe whose strength lies in other than their kin, both lightly armed men and squadrons of cavalry fight on their behalf... Iyād have moved down into lower Iraq; offering protection to them are Persian lancers seeking out those who would fight them.⁸⁴

Unfortunately, we do not have much information to answer these and other questions. These Arab clients, even the mighty Lakhm, did not generally leave us any documents. The sole exception is Ghassān, from whom we do have a number of inscriptions. Here they appear as perfect Byzantine allies, writing in Greek, flaunting their imperial titles and their staunch allegiance to Christianity, though we do have a hint of another side to their identity in the aforementioned inscription from Jabal Says, south-east of Damascus, written by a soldier despatched by 'al-Hārith the king' in Arabic language and Arabic script (so, though in imperial dealings they wrote in Greek, amongst themselves they presumably used Arabic). In addition, there is the large corpus of poetry composed in honour of chiefs of Ghassān, which, if genuine, would suggest that these chiefs used their imperial subsidies to create their own courts and sponsor their own brand of poetry centred around their own heroic world of generosity and forbearance in peace and courage and fidelity in war, a veritable archive of their own glorious deeds immortalised in lofty Arabic diction.⁸⁵ Put together, the evidence shows that Ghassān had their own military following and were involved at a high level in the imperial

⁸² John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.3 (Mundhir) (ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks); al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1.853 (Nu'mān). This would appear to have been on top of various other military cadres, such as levies (*wadī'a*) personal clients (*ṣanī'a*), and hostages (*raḥā'in*); see Rothstein 1899: 134–8, and Kister 1968: 165–8.

⁸³ Lyall 1918: no. 54, line 20 (Muraqqish the Elder). ⁸⁴ Lyall 1918: no. 41 (Akhnas ibn Shihāb).

⁸⁵ Now well and thoroughly presented and discussed in Shahid 1984–2002: 3.2; see also Hoyland 2007a.

and church hierarchies⁸⁶ (in contemporary inscriptions and manuscripts their leaders are called *patrikios*, *phylarchos*, *endoxotatos*, *philochristos*, etc.) and they engaged in constructing buildings and patronising culture. Furthermore, they had their own regional powerbase, the Damascus region, where they were acknowledged as powerbrokers by the local authorities, as is evidenced by inscriptions from there dated according to their time in office,⁸⁷ and by a Syriac manuscript of 570 CE that bears the signatures of the priests and abbots of the 'eparchy of Arabia' and recognises the authority of the Ghassanid phylarch.⁸⁸ All of this is enough to suggest that we may make better progress on the question of Rome's interaction with the 'eastern barbarians' if we consider Ghassān, and other 'Arab' polities, on a par with the west Roman kingdoms/proto-states of the Goths, Franks and others rather than as just nomadic tribesmen.

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⁸⁶ For example, both al-Ḥārith ibn Jabala and his son Mundhir ibn Ḥārith exchanged letters and visits with church leaders, presided over councils and even went to Constantinople to debate matters of dispute between Christian groups (see Shahid 1984–2002: 3.1 for more examples and exhaustive discussion). Note also the Ghassanid phylarch Abū Kārib's involvement in the settlement of a dispute between two church deacons concerning the sale of a vineyard (Kaimio 2001: 2.719–24).

⁸⁷ *IGLS* 2553bd (Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, on lintel of former monastery, 870 = 569 CE) and *IGLS* 2110 (Hayyat, on a house, recording construction of a courtyard, 473 of the eparchy = 578 CE), both from the vicinity of Damascus, state that they were written 'in the time of... the archimandrite and of the deacon Anastasius and of the phylarchate of the most illustrious Harith' and 'in the time of Mundhir, *paneuphēmos* and *patrikios*' respectively; i.e. instead of in the time of a Roman emperor or provincial governor. Similarly, an event in John Moschus' *Pratum Spirituale* is dated to 'when Nu'mān (*Names*), the phylarch of the Saracens, was making raids' (*Patrologia Graeca* 87.3, 3024 = chapter 155 (ed. J. P. Migne)) and Ms. BM Syriac 585 of the monastery of Natpha near Tadmur (Palmyra) is dated to when Abū Kārib, a Ghassanid, was king (Wright 1871: 2.468).

⁸⁸ From which Nöldeke 1875: 420 concludes: 'Dies lässt sich nur so erklären, dass diese mono-physische Kirchenprovinz "Arabia" so weit gerechnet wurde, wie die Macht der Ghassānischen Phylarchen ging'; that is, ecclesiastical 'Arabia' was pretty much coterminous with the Ghassanid sphere of authority. See also Shahid 1984–2002: 3.821–38.

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CHAPTER 17

*Greek, Coptic and the 'language of the Hijra': the rise and decline of the Coptic language in late antique and medieval Egypt**

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INTRODUCTION

Functional domains of languages and the difference between spoken and written language

In bi- or multilingual societies, the use of one or another language depends on a few basic parameters and a number of social variables which have been put together in the sociolinguistic concept of 'functional domains'.¹ Speakers can use, for example, one language within their families, another one in business affairs, etc.² Empirical studies have brought to light typical clusters of functional domains, resulting from common speaker attitudes towards their languages, which can frequently be classified within a binary scheme as 'Dominant' vs. 'Minority' languages (see Table 17.1).³ These assumptions, reasonable as they are, have not yet been fully applied to the field of ancient bilingualism, where the use of a certain language is often simply taken as a shibboleth of a correlative personal identity. Although in some circumstances language use may indeed function as a claim of belonging to a societal group, or express a sense of identity with that group, we cannot draw conclusions from occasionally attested connections between persons and languages without taking the full range of their language options into account,⁴ including their spoken medium(s) too, which usually have to be guessed, or reconstructed.

In everyday bi- or multilingual spoken communication, it is the speakers' social competence, their acquired knowledge of language behaviour, which serves as an 'intrinsic' guide to more or less appropriate

* I am indebted to David Wasserstein, who took it upon himself to improve the poor English of this paper.

¹ Cf. Tsunoda 2005: 65–9.

² Cf. Fishman 1965: 67–88.

³ Tsunoda 2005: 59–62.

⁴ This point has been made perfectly plain by Stroumsa 2006.

Table 17.1 *Functional domains of minority vs. dominant languages*
(Tsunoda 2005:64)

<i>Minority language</i>			<i>Dominant language</i>
(a)	traditional life	vs.	modern life
(b)	regional	vs.	national
(c)	within community	vs.	with the outside world
(d)	domestic, private	vs.	public
(e)	inside the family	vs.	outside family
(f)	informal	vs.	formal
(g)	intimate	vs.	not intimate
(h)	for solidarity	vs.	for power
(i)	for secrecy	vs.	for non-secrecy
(j)	religious	vs.	secular

language choices, similar to the way in which they would choose certain lexical and/or phraseological means belonging to different registers of a single language in order to form stylistically different utterances, simply depending on actual circumstances of speech. Language choice in the written medium, on the contrary,⁵ is determined by somewhat other conditions. Its impetus is never instinctive or unintentional, but the result of prior consideration. Hence it is mainly in written or writing-based genres such as epigraphy or liturgy that practically dead languages or language varieties continue to be used, surviving the obsolescence of those languages in the realm of spoken language. In such cases, the avoidance of the linguistic means of everyday communication is highly intentional, and functions as a revealing means of expression. At any rate, whenever two or more languages are at an author's (or, as in the example of epigraphy, a patron's) disposal, language choice is meaningful and has to be interpreted with regard to both the overall implications of language contact and the specific distribution patterns of language domains within the given society.

Language change in the Egyptian-Coptic language

The current standard model concerning the evolution of the Egyptian language⁶ is based on the evidence left by a dead written language: its linguistic reality as well as its historic totality are available only within the

⁵ On modal and structural differences of these two mediums of language, cf. Stubb 1980; Akinnaso 1982: 97–125; Tannen 1984; Biber 1986; Chafe and Tannen 1987; Biber 1988; Barton 1994; Jahandarie 1999; Stetter 1999; Stenström and Aijmer 2004. For the case of written vs. spoken Coptic see Richter 2006b.

⁶ On Ancient Egyptian language cf. Schenkel 1990, and Loprieno 1995. Cf. the large-scale case study by Shisha-Halevy 2000. On the Coptic language, see most recently Layton 2004.

confines of a large textual corpus.⁷ 'Horizontal' borders are the inevitable restrictions of any written language by standards, such as orthographic conventions, implicitly aimed at defending a given linguistic state against the diversity of ever-shifting norms – the changeability of spoken language. 'Vertical' boundaries, as it were, are formed by the spectrum of used or attested sorts of texts: far from representing the whole range of possible utterances, these genres tend to display a selection of more or less highly standardised linguistic registers closely associated with socially conditioned *Aufzeichnungen-Situationen*, that is to say, with the decorum of written language applications. If, nevertheless, language change becomes visible to us, it is not as a dynamic process – the successive shifting of single phonetic, morphological, lexical and syntactic norms driven by permanent violations of them – but rather as the linguistic diversity of attested texts from different periods which obviously mirrors shifted states of the language.

As far as the development from Old Egyptian (the written language of the Old Kingdom) down to Demotic (the written language used especially but not only in documentary texts from the mid-seventh century BCE down to Roman times) is concerned, language change does not seem to be – at least not essentially – motivated or directed by language contact.⁸ By contrast, the difference between Demotic and Coptic does appear to a large extent to be the result of Greek–Egyptian language contact, which went back roughly 1,000 years⁹ at the time when the Coptic writing system became standardised around 300 CE. An increasing bilingualism of Egyptian society during the time of Macedonian (332–330 BCE)¹⁰ and Roman rule (30 BCE onwards)¹¹ led to the incorporation of a great many Greek loanwords of almost all grammatical and semantic categories into the Egyptian lexicon. Being almost 'invisible' in pre-Coptic stages of written Egyptian, this linguistic Hellenisation resulted in the *maintenance* of the Egyptian language, but as a strongly Hellenised idiom.¹² Emerging by the end of the third century CE, Coptic almost completely disappeared

⁷ Relevant methodological issues are addressed e.g. by Milroy 1992 and Schneider 2002. Cf. also Langslow 2002.

⁸ On non-contact-induced motivations of language change, cf. Labov 1994.

⁹ On the cultural background of language contact in first-millennium BCE Egypt, cf. the excellent overview by Vittmann 2003.

¹⁰ Peremans 1964; Remondon 1964; Peremans 1983; Vergote 1984.

¹¹ Cf. most recently Fewster 2002, and Dieleman *Priests: 103–10*. On the use and function of Latin in Roman Egypt, cf. Rochette 1996.

¹² Cf. Reintges 2001; Reintges 2004: 2–3. Reintges would go so far as to classify Coptic as a 'mixed language', a view which does not seem completely convincing to me, cf. below, section on 'Greek loanwords in Coptic'.

about 1,000 years later. Not only its rise but its decline is deeply rooted in the contemporary language contact situation. By the Arab conquest of Egypt in 641 CE, a development was starting which might have proceeded in a way similar to the former Hellenisation in its initial stage. However, it resulted in *language death*, that of Egyptian, and *language shift*, that of its speakers to Arabic. Any attempt to describe the final stage of the Egyptian language change suffers from the methodological difficulty sketched above: until the Fatimid period, when Egyptian Christians may have begun to use Arabic even within their own communities, Arabisation left only scant traces in a few types of Coptic texts. The increasing influence of Arabic on the Egyptian language, however plausible in the spoken language,¹³ did not become obvious in written texts before the whole Coptic literary tradition began to be translated into Arabic from the eleventh century onwards. This advanced stage of Arabic–Coptic language contact and bilingualism marks what was but the beginning of an almost total language replacement of Coptic by Arabic.

Who spoke, and eventually wrote, Coptic?

From everything we know it must be assumed that the spoken language behind the written evidence of Coptic was usually acquired as a first language, which means as mother tongue in non-Hellenised, or non-Arabised Egyptian families, but scarcely, if at all, as a second language. Consequently, the sociolinguistic value of the native language of Egypt under Ptolemaic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic rules seems to have been that of a minority language, with Greek (and later Arabic) as dominant language.¹⁴ Despite Egyptian evidence for scientific writing still in Roman times¹⁵ and the enormous resources of philosophical profundity suspected in hieroglyphic scriptures,¹⁶ praised

¹³ Cf. Sercombe 2002: 3: 'It would seem that there is but one undisputed point about language shift: no single factor or group of factors has yet been revealed to indicate when shift might take place. On the other hand, few would now dispute that there appears to be a basic core of crucial factors that can determine language vitality or the lack of it; the foremost of these is the immediate or local context in which a language is extant, within which contact with other languages is perhaps the most significant single variable, since contact is always in evidence in a shift situation... As Fasold 1984: 240 maintains, "a virtual prerequisite for shift is bilingualism".'

¹⁴ Cf. Thompson 1994. ¹⁵ References are given by Osing 1998: 21.

¹⁶ The *locus classicus* is Corpus Hermeticum 16.2, where not only the existence of Egyptian sources of wisdom (namely, the revelations of Hermes), but also the particular efficacy of the Egyptian language for appropriating them is claimed – in contrast to the weakness of Greek: 'The Greeks, O King, use empty words which produce mere displays. That is the philosophy of the Greeks: a noise of words. We do not use such a language but sounds full of power' (translated by Salaman *et al.* 2000: 74).

by a rising choir of worshippers of Egyptian cults spread all over the ancient Mediterranean (among them some highly educated intellectuals, such as Chairemon, Plutarch, Apuleius, and Iamblichus), all functional domains of any practical relevance were successively occupied by Greek, which became more and more the language of administration, the language of higher education, the language of modern sciences and philosophical thought (which even Egyptians like Chairemon preferred to use), and last but not least, the language of the economy.

Apart from its primary function as the vernacular of monolingual (or gradually bilingual, but not fully Hellenised) Egyptians, the written form of Coptic-Egyptian held out in some particular domains. Just as the latest applications of hieroglyphic writing systems had been closely connected with a distinct religious milieu – the priesthoods of Egyptian cults in rural areas, the Coptic written language too was a biased medium in terms of religious creeds from its origins shortly before 300 CE, not invented, but refined and properly put in circulation by worshippers of late antique *Buchreligionen* – Gnostics, Manichaeans and Christians (cf. sections below, 'The religious significance of Coptic' and 'Religious distribution of languages in Egypt around 300 CE'). Not only the earliest pieces of Coptic *literature* – religious texts mostly translated from Greek – but also early Coptic documentary texts bear evidence of Christian and Manichaean individuals, groups and institutions outside the urban settlements.¹⁷

When Egypt was conquered by 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ in 641 CE, the Arabs may have encountered a mass of monolingual Coptic speakers, a fair number of bilingualists speaking Coptic as their first language and, with more or less proficiency, Greek as their second, and even a monolingual Greek-speaking elite, now deprived of power, so that when Arabic started being spoken and written in Egypt, a basically trilingual constellation emerged. A number of functional domains formerly held by Greek, above all the administration, were partially taken over by Arabic,¹⁸ and some textual genres belonging to the realm of private affairs by Coptic, which clearly enjoyed its widest spread during the first two centuries after the conquest: it was then that a great many private

¹⁷ Cf. the overview on early Coptic documentary evidence provided by Richter *Rechtssemantik*: 18–22, and recently by Choat 2006. Choat 2006, mainly dealing with private letters, also addresses the difficulty of judging the sender's or addressee's religious creeds on the mere base of epistolary phraseology which holds particularly true in the case of letters written in Greek.

¹⁸ But Greek still remained in use in Egyptian chancelleries during the eighth century, cf. Worp 1985.

records were drawn up in Coptic, and only then did Coptic become a common medium of private expression in epigraphy.¹⁹ But Coptic never came anywhere close to the importance of Greek or Arabic as a linguistic means for administrative, public, and representative purposes, and even its role as a language of private legal documents was temporally limited and socially restricted. Furthermore, Coptic never became a language, let alone the original language, of contemporary sciences and scholarship, with perhaps the sole exception of theology.

THE EVOLUTION OF COPTIC AS A LANGUAGE CONTACT PHENOMENON

Two conspicuous non-Egyptian features of Coptic

The term 'Coptic' refers both to a new writing system and to the corresponding rejuvenated norm of the Egyptian language. Its emergence under heavy Greek impact is obvious in the change from the traditional hieroglyph-based writing systems to the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet, augmented by six or seven letters generated from Demotic signs in order to represent distinctively Egyptian phonemes.²⁰ Furthermore, the evidence of language contact is to be seen in the enormous quantity of Greek loanwords in Coptic, including words of almost all semantic and grammatical categories.²¹ In dealing with the rise of Coptic as a language contact phenomenon, it may be useful to trace these two obviously Greek-influenced features of Coptic: the incorporation of Greek words into the Egyptian vocabulary and the representation of Egyptian sounds by means of Greek letters.

Greek loan words in Demotic

There is indeed a small number of Greek loanwords already in pre-Coptic written Egyptian. But even Demotic,²² the immediate predecessor of Coptic, although a variety of written Egyptian closely connected with everyday matters, does not reflect the true level of lexical borrowing that must have been attained in spoken Egyptian of the Ptolemaic and

¹⁹ On the age of Coptic epigraphy, cf. T. S. Richter's forthcoming entry 'Coptic Epigraphy', in *The Encyclopaedia of Early Christian Art and Architecture*, ed. Paul Corby Finney.

²⁰ Kasser 1991e and 1992; cf. also Kasser 1991a and Kasser 1991b. ²¹ Kasser 1991d.

²² For this stage of Egyptian see the excellent introduction by Depauw 1997; on relevant sociolinguistic issues, cf. Ray 1994. In hieroglyphic texts of that time, borrowing from Greek seems to be limited to proper names and imperial titles of Ptolemaic kings and Roman emperors; for the latter cf. Bureth 1964.

Table 17.2 Greek loanwords in Demotic (examples from Clarysse 1987)

εὐχάριστος	>	ʔwqrsts	<i>beneficent</i> (a royal epithet)
σωτήρ	>	swtr	<i>saviour</i> (a royal epithet)
νικηφόρος	>	nqpls	<i>victorious</i> (a royal epithet)
ἡγεμῶν	>	hgm̄n	<i>leader</i> (a title)
στρατηγός	>	strks	<i>governor of a nome</i> (a title)
σταθμός	>	sttm̄s	<i>weight</i> (an accounting term)
στατήρ	>	sttr	<i>statêr</i> (a coin)
σύνταξις	>	sntks	<i>syntaxis</i> (a tax)
λάγυρος	>	lkjnws	<i>flask</i> (used as measure)
πίναξ	>	pjnks	<i>board, plate</i>
χλάμυς	>	klms	<i>mantle, cloak</i>
δουξ (< lat. <i>dux</i>)	>	twkse	<i>leader</i> (a title)

Roman periods. In 1987, Willy Clarysse compiled a list of Greek loanwords in Demotic texts identified thus far: a total of no more than ninety-six words over a 620-year period of time.²³ The semantic range of these words is in the main restricted to a few special types of designation like epithets of kings, titles of officials, administrative, legal and military terms, names of coins, measures and taxes (Table 17.2), while only a couple concern diverse items of daily use. Only nouns are attested, a fairly simple, unpretentious word class with regard to its internal categories and consequently easy to insert into syntactic structures, but the most important one with regard to linguistic acquisition of new things and concepts.²⁴ Two sources of pre-Coptic lexical borrowing from Greek were deliberately left out by Clarysse, who considered they were not typical: first, a dossier of late Demotic (late second-century CE) school exercises and private notes written on potsherds,²⁵ which show an astonishing laxity of linguistic decorum, permitting Greek words *written in Greek letters* to be inserted into the retrograde flow of the Demotic cursive,²⁶ and even attesting verb borrowing.²⁷ Second, a couple of late

²³ Clarysse 1987.

²⁴ Cf. already Weinreich 1968: 56: 'The need to designate new things, persons, places, and concepts is, obviously, a universal cause of lexical innovation. By determining which innovations of this type are loanwords, the linguist may help to show what one language community has learned from another.'

²⁵ Bresciani *et al.* 1983; Menchetti 2005.

²⁶ Cf. Fewster 2002: 221–4; Tait 1994. The application of a mixed code with two different writing systems as sources might have been just an aim of these exercises rather than a mistake, caused by the pupils' clumsy hands or minds.

²⁷ The way of embedding Greek verbs is a periphrastic construction using the Egyptian verb *ir* 'to do', as is well known from the northern dialects of Coptic, and also, I understand, from many languages of the world. For a typology of verb borrowing, cf. Moravcsik 1975.

Demotic (second–third-century CE) manuscripts²⁸ containing medical and magical recipes with many ingredients designated by Greek names: ‘In these . . . texts Greek words are very commonly used for all kinds of plants and products, no doubt because Greek science heavily influenced Egyptian science in matters of medicine and magic. Seen in this light, these texts form a special category that deserves special treatment.’²⁹ Looking at the evidence of Arabic loanwords in late Coptic texts (cf. below, ‘Arabic loanwords in Coptic texts’), we shall meet quite similar patterns and exceptions.

Greek loanwords in Coptic

As mentioned above, lexical borrowing from Greek forms an important source of Coptic vocabulary.³⁰ However, even if the inherited Egyptian vocabulary was enlarged by Greek lexemes of almost all semantic and grammatical categories, this was realised in a way that maintained the grammatical framework of the language. Certain semantic fields, e.g. all sets of pronouns as well as the numerals, remained resistant to lexical borrowing.³¹ Furthermore, if borrowability³² applies to Greek words of almost all grammatical classes – including content morphemes (e.g. nouns and verbs) as well as function morphemes (e.g. conjunctions and particles of merely rhetorical efficacy) – it does not apply to those function morphemes working with a mechanism improper to the structure of the Egyptian language: a stop just before the ‘turning point’ as suggested by Carol Myers-Scotton in the Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis

²⁸ A medical papyrus from Crocodilopolis and four late Demotic collections of magical spells and receipts; for bibliographical references, cf. Depauw 1997: 109–11.

²⁹ Clarysse 1987: 9–10. On this sort of Greek loanwords in Demotic and their function, cf. Dieleman *Priests*: 110–20. The type has been classified linguistically as ‘nomenclature’ or ‘terminological’ vocabulary (as opposed to the ‘structured’ vocabulary) by Coseriu 1970: 13: ‘Wichtig jedoch ist die Erkenntnis, dass innerhalb dessen, was als “Wortschatz” einer Sprache bezeichnet wird, grosse, rein “designative” Teile existieren, wo die einzig mögliche “Strukturierung” die Aufzählung ist, und andere Teile, die strukturiert sind, aber nicht vom Standpunkt der Sprache aus, nämlich dass es einen sprachlichen, strukturierten Wortschatz, und einen “nomenklatorischen” und terminologischen Wortschatz gibt.’

³⁰ Foerster 2002, comprises about 2,500 Greek lemmata from non-literary Coptic texts only; cf. also Kasser 1991d, and Richter 2003a: 732.

³¹ Cf. Richter 2003a: 733. As for hierarchies of borrowability and domains of restricted borrowability, cf. Field 2002: 34–48; Oswalt 1975. The lack of structural borrowing in the case of Coptic has rightly been emphasised by Oréal 1999.

³² For a general discussion of the typology of borrowability, see Hapelmith 2003; van Hout and Muysken 1994.

Table 17.3 *Matrix language turnover hypothesis according to Myers-Scotton 1998*

START: L 1: Matrix Language	L 2: Embedded Language
G	Code Switching:
r	
a ← ← ← Content morphemes	
m	
m ← ← ← Function morphemes	
a	
t	
i	Convergence:
c	
a ← ← Structural borrowing (Grammatical calquing)	
l	
F	
r	
a	
m	
e	
RESULT: L 1: Language Attrition	L 2: Matrix Language

Table 17.4 *First Letter of Clement 42.4 in the Achmimic dialect of Coptic (ed. Schmidt): bold set morphemes are Coptic, all others are Greek*

<p> ⲁⲩⲧⲏⲣⲏⲥⲥⲉ ⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲁⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲭⲱⲣⲁ ⲁⲩⲧⲏⲣⲏⲥⲥⲉ Ⲣⲏⲟⲩⲧⲏⲥⲥⲉ ⲁⲡⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲁⲩⲧⲏⲣⲏⲥⲥⲉ ⲉ ⲡⲏⲛⲉⲩⲩⲁ ⲉ ⲡⲏⲛⲉⲩⲩⲁ ⲉ ⲡⲏⲛⲉⲩⲩⲁ ⲉ ⲡⲏⲛⲉⲩⲩⲁ ⲉ ⲡⲏⲛⲉⲩⲩⲁ ⲉ ⲡⲏⲛⲉⲩⲩⲁ ⲉ ⲡⲏⲛⲉⲩⲩⲁ </p> <p> 'They preached (κηρύσσειν) then in (κατὰ) town (πόλις) and throughout (κατὰ) the land (χώρα), they installed (καθιστάναι) their first-fruits (ἀπαρχή), they proved (δοκιμάζειν) by the (Holy) Spirit (πνεῦμα) the bishops (ἐπίσκοπος) and deacons (διάκονος), who would believe (πιστεύειν).' </p>
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(Table 17.3).³³ The strategy of Coptic is demonstrated in Table 17.4, an example showing an extremely high rate of Greek loanwords: all content morphemes up to prepositions are borrowed from Greek, while structure-building morphemes are Egyptian without exception.

³³ Cf. Myers-Scotton 1998. In bilingual or multilingual situations, the hypothesis claims, there is always one of two or more languages (called matrix language) which provides a speaker or a speaker community with a grammatical framework, the linguistic chassis of any utterance. The second, so-called embedded language penetrates the matrix language by code switching – the insertion of loan morphemes, realised in morphologically 'hybrid' but grammatically 'correct' utterances – and by convergence, coining patterns of the second language on morphemes of the first one. At a certain point of language attrition of the first language, the turnover starts, leading to the overtaking of the framework-building force by the second language.

Table 17.5 *Greek graffito from the great temple of Abu Simbel (SB 10018), lines 1–4, early sixth century BCE: Egyptian proper names in Greek transcription*

Line 1 ΒΑΣΙΛΕΟΣ ΕΛΘΟΝΤΟΣ Ε(Ι)Σ ΕΛΕΦΑΝΤΙΝΑΝ ΨΑΜΑΤΙΧΟ(Υ)
 After King **Psammetichos** (*P̄-s-n-mṯk*) arrival at Elephantine,

Line 2 ΤΑΥΤΑ ΕΓΡΑΨΑΝ ΤΟΙ ΣΥΝ ΨΑΜΜΑΤΙΧΟΙ ΤΟΙ ΘΕΟΚΛΟ(Υ)Σ
 these (words) were written by those (who were) together with **Psammetichos**
 (*P̄-s-n-mṯk*) son of Theoklos

Line 4... ΑΛΟΓΛΟΣΟ(Υ)Σ Δ'ΗΧΕ ΠΟΤΑΣΙΜΤΟ ΑΙΓΥΠΤΙΟ(Υ)Σ ΔΕ
 AMASIS

... while **Potasimto** (*Pa-di-sm̄-ṯ.wj*) was leading the foreigners, **Amasis**
 (*Tḥ-ms*) however the Egyptians

Early attempts to write Egyptian in Greek letters

The first attempts to transcribe Egyptian sounds by means of Greek letters obviously arose from the need to write down untranslatable Egyptian words.³⁴ The earliest attested example is the famous inscription left by Greek soldiers at the great *speos* of Abu Simbel during their expansion to Nubia under Pharaoh Psammetichus II in 593 BCE (Table 17.5).³⁵ Unlike the Egyptian toponym *Iêb*, calqued by the word *Elephantine* (line 1), the names of four persons had to be transcribed: the name of king *Psammetichus* himself (line 1), that of an officer of the same name (line 2), and the names of the two generals *Potasimto* and *Amasis* (line 4). In fact, toponyms and even names of gods can be translated both in a linguistic and in a cultural sense,³⁶ but a personal name, being a ‘historically individualized lexeme’³⁷ cannot be: in its character as a personal name, its only ‘meaning’ is the reference to the person who bears it, and who can be referred to only by uttering the sounds forming his or her name. Hence, a translation seems to be impossible even if the name in its character as a common noun does possess an appellative meaning.³⁸ On the other hand, ‘common

³⁴ Cf. Quaegebeur 1982; on phonological implications Satzinger 2003.

³⁵ Yoyotte 1953: 101–06; Bernand and Masson 1957; Eide *et al.* 1994: 286–8, no. 42 (with further bibliographical references); see most recently Vittmann 2003: 200–1.

³⁶ So often managed e.g. by the Greek ethnographer Herodotus, dealing with the land of Egypt and the strange customs of its inhabitants in his second book.

³⁷ Coseriu 1970: 3.

³⁸ In bilingual societies with the cultural practice of bearing double names, both parts of bilingual name couples can be formed by translational equivalents of each other, cf. Rutherford 2002: 209–10. For that practice in Greek and Roman Egypt see Quaegebeur 1992. But in principle, the condition of successfully referring to a person bearing two names is just the same, and it does not at

Table 17.6 Words from P.Heid. inv. G 414, a Greek–Egyptian word list, third (?) century BCE (ed. Quecke 1997), and their later equivalents in the Sahidic (Upper Egyptian) and Fayyumic (Middle Egyptian) Coptic dialects

Greek column	Egyptian column	Meaning	Coptic equivalents
...	ΣΒΗ	door	S cβε, F cβη
ΚΛΙΝΗ	ΚΛΑΚ	bed	S 𐪓𐪗𐪔𐪓, F 𐪓𐪗𐪔𐪓
ΤΑΛΑΝΤΟΝ	ΚΩΡΙ	talent (a weight)	Demotic krr; S, F 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓
ΑΞΙΝΗ	ΚΟΛΕΒΕΙΝ	axe	S, F 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓
ΣΙΔΗΡΟΣ	ΒΕΝΙΠΙ	iron	S 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓, F 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓
ΜΑΧΑΙΡΑ	ΣΗΦΙ	sword	S 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓, F 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓
ΥΠΟΠΟΔΙΟΝ	ΤΑΞ	seat	S 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓, F 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓
ΛΗΝΟΣ	...	trough	
ΠΕΡΙΣΤΕΡΑ	ΚΡΑΝΠΙ	dove	S 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓, F 𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓𐪓
ΜΟΣΧΟΣ	ΑΓΟΛ(?)	calf	(not attested)
ΟΝΟΣ	ΕΙΩ	donkey	S 𐪓𐪓𐪓, F 𐪓𐪓𐪓

lexemes', that is to say linguistic signs (*signifiants*) of distinct things or concepts (*signifiés*), are translatable in principle. Thus, a Greek transcription of Egyptian words like the names of certain tools and animals attested in *P.Heidelberg* 414 (third century BCE)³⁹ (Table 17.6) offers evidence of an interest in acquisition and knowledge of a foreign language. The arrangement in two columns, the first one containing the Greek *lemmata*, leads to the conclusion that this glossary was intended to enable a Greek speaker to utter certain Egyptian words.⁴⁰ A graffito from Abydos⁴¹ (Table 17.7) shows a more pretentious 'linguistic project'. It displays not only *single* Egyptian words in Greek letters but several words forming short phrases, that is to say *grammatical structures*. The text forms a dating formula of Pharaoh Hor-Wenefer (*porô Yrgonofris*, line 1), an Egyptian usurper against the fifth Ptolemy, and it is datable precisely to 202/201 BCE. A similar stage of expertise in transcribing Egyptian by means of Greek letters is attested in an inscription⁴² on a stela erected by priests of Thot in honour of the *strategos* of the Hermopolite nome by the end of the second century BCE. (Table 17.8). The transcription of divine epithets of Thot obviously

all depend on the same meaning of the two names (i.e. the semantic correlate of their conceptual content in their character as common nouns).

³⁹ Bilabel 1938; Quecke 1997.

⁴⁰ While 'common' bilingual or semi-bilingual speakers of that time are thought to have been native speakers of Egyptian, cf. Clarysse 1993.

⁴¹ Lacau 1934; Pestman *Recueil*: I 102–5, no. II; II III–12.

⁴² Girgis 1965: 121.

Table 17.7 *Graffito from Abydos, lines 2–4 (ed. Pestman Recueil): dating formula and royal epithets of the Upper Egyptian usurper Hor-Wenefer 202/201 BCE*

2	ΛΕ <i>l̥.t-sp</i> 5 Reg.-year	Π Ο Ρ Ω <i>Pr-?</i> 5 of Pharaoh	Υ Ρ Γ Ο Ν Α Φ Ο Ρ <i>Hr-Wn-nfr</i> Horwenefer	
3	Μ Η Ι <i>mrj-</i> beloved	Ε Σ Ι <i>'Is.t</i> by Isis	Ν Ο Μ <i>nm</i> and	Ο Υ Σ Ι Ρ Ε <i>Wsir</i> Osiris,
				Μ Η Ι Ε <i>mrj - 'I-</i> beloved by
4	Μ Ο Υ Ν Α Α <i>mn - R'</i> Amun-Ra,	Σ Ο Ν Τ Η Ρ <i>nswt - ntr.w</i> king of gods,	Π Ν Ο Τ Ω <i>p; ntr ';</i> the great god	

Table 17.8 *Stela in honour of a strategos of the Hermopolite nome (Alexandria inv. 26.050), line 4 (ed. Girgis 1965), second century BCE: epithets of the god Thot*

... οἱ ἱερεῖς τοῦ	Θωυθ ω ω ω νοβ Ζμουv
	<i>Ḏhwṯi ' ; ' ; nb Ḥmnw</i>
‘... the priests of Thot, the great, great, great, lord of Hermopolis ... ’	

aimed to decode the true, thorough pronunciation of these meaningful ‘surnames’ of the god, an undertaking of limited success because of the difference between Greek and Egyptian phonology. The existing set of Greek alphabetic signs was inadequate to represent certain Egyptian phonemes, like /sh/ in the word Shmoun (the Egyptian name of Hermopolis), which is poorly represented by the Greek letter zeta /z/.⁴³

Old-Coptic writing systems

So-called Old-Coptic manuscripts come to us from the first three centuries CE.⁴⁴ Some of them are quite extensive and show advanced and fairly standardised methods of transcription. Although their systems differ from each other, they all use sets of signs of Egyptian origin in order to resolve the problem of differences between the Greek and the Egyptian phonemic inventories, just as proper Coptic does. However, the grammar

⁴³ Coptic proper has **ϣ** = /s/. In later Greek transcriptions of Arabic names, the Arabic phonem /s/ was represented by τζ or σζ in Greek, as in the governor’s name Qurra ibn Šariq: Κορρα βειν/υιος Τζαρικ or Σζαρικ.
⁴⁴ See in general Satzinger 1984; Kasser 1991c; Satzinger 1991.

Table 17.9 Chester Beatty Papyrus VII: Greek Isaiah with Egyptian glosses, mid-third century CE (eds. Kenyon and Crum 1937)*Isa. XI:5*

και εσται δικαιοσυνη **εζωσμε-**
νος την οσφυν **και αληθεια ει-**
λημενος τας πλευρας και &c.

ΕΒΩΗΛ ΝΤΩΕΙ 'being girl' 'with truth
 [ΕΒΚ]ΔΔΛΕ being covered'

Isa. XVI:2-3

μη πετρα ερημος εστιν το ορος Σει
 ων' εση γαρ ως πετεινου ανιπτα
 μ]ενου [νεοσσοσ] αφηρημενος η θυ
 γατ]ηρ Μ[ωαβ επι τ]αδε Αρνων πλει
 ονα **βουλενου ποιε]ιτε σκεπην**
πενθους αυτη δια παντος εν] μεσεινβρυη
 σκοτια φευγουσιν **εξ]εστρεσαν** &c.

ΕΛΧΝΙ 'take council,
 ΕΤΒΕ concerning
 ΔΕΡΜΘ Aermom,
 ΔΛΕΗ make
 ΙΝΝΟΥ a
 ΣΚΕΠΗ shelter (σκεπη)
 ΙΝΗΒΙ ΝΕC of grief to her'

of these texts is still pre-Coptic, their vocabulary lacks Greek loanwords and their religious background is pagan. Among them one comes across such texts as an astrological horoscope,⁴⁵ magical spells⁴⁶ and a petition to the god Osiris.⁴⁷ The capacity of these Old-Coptic writing systems to display Egyptian words fully vocalised also came into play in manuscripts written in hieroglyphic scripts in order to gloss unusual words, as in late Hieratic manuscripts⁴⁸ and in Demotic magical papyri where *vores magicæ* are often glossed by Old-Coptic spellings.⁴⁹

Earliest Coptic glosses and texts

It would be hard to draw a sharp line between those Old-Coptic efforts, which were situated in the pagan milieus of Roman Egypt, and the earliest evidence of what is usually classified as Coptic, being associated with Christian milieus in a wide sense. A Greek Isaiah codex dating from the mid-third century CE⁵⁰ was glossed with Egyptian translation words and phrases (Table 17.9). They are spelled only in Greek letters, without the aid of Egyptian signs. But a Greek loanword does occur. By contrast, one early Coptic manuscript, the Old Testament book of Proverbs, *P.Bodmer VI*,⁵¹ shows an excessive amount of Egyptian signs used

⁴⁵ Cerny, Kahle and Parker 1957; Kasser 1963.

⁴⁶ Crum 1942; Osing 1976; Meyer 1985; Dieleman *Priests*; Sederholm 2006.

⁴⁷ Satzinger 1975; Richter 2002. ⁴⁸ Cf. Osing 1998: 52–64.

⁴⁹ E.g. the large manuscript edited by Griffith and Thompson 1904–9.

⁵⁰ Kenyon and Crum 1937. ⁵¹ Ed. by Kasser 1960; cf. Cherix 2000 and Kasser 2003.

in addition to the Greek alphabet: instead of six or seven, the writing system of this manuscript works with no fewer than ten letters taken from Demotic, in this regard strikingly recalling the lower standardised state of Old-Coptic writing systems. But the grammar of *P.Bodmer VI* is undoubtedly Coptic, and the number of Greek loanwords holds the level of any later Coptic text.⁵² At least the extensive use of Greek loanwords seems to work as a linguistic 'shibboleth' distinguishing Coptic in a narrower sense from the language of Old-Coptic as well as Demotic texts.

The religious significance of Coptic

The existence of several Coptic translations of parts of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and of New Testament books by 300 CE marks the definite 'arrival' of Christian Holy Scriptures in the rural regions of Egypt, the peripheral area outside urban realms of Hellenistic acculturation in language and life style.⁵³ But not only Christian religious literature is attested in Coptic versions from that time. Gnostic manuscripts, among them thirteen codices forming part of a Gnostic library from the mid-fourth century (the so-called Nag Hammadi codices),⁵⁴ as well as a large Coptic corpus of Manichaean scriptures dating before and around 400 CE,⁵⁵ offer evidence of other late antique *Offenbarungsreligionen* making use of the new type of written Egyptian. Around the middle of the twentieth century, several scholars tried to pin down the relationship between the missionary activities of *Buchreligionen* in Egypt and the rapid spread of Coptic around 300 CE. In 1948, Louis-Théophile Lefort attempted to prove that there had been Jewish efforts to translate Septuagint books into the Coptic dialect of Upper Egypt.⁵⁶ However, his argument, based on textual criticism, has not been sustained by recent research, the more so as Egyptian Jews, to the best of our knowledge, never acquired the Egyptian language either as their mother tongue or even as a tool for recording

⁵² Richter 2003a: 732.

⁵³ Cf. Frankfurter 1998: 248–52, 'The Holiness of Languages and the Evolution of Coptic Script', and the recent approach to the issue by Torallas Tovar 2005.

⁵⁴ Cf. recently Schenke, Bethge and Kaiser 2001–3; the extensive bibliography was collected by Scholer 1997.

⁵⁵ Schmidt and Polotsky 1933; as a recent bibliographical tool, cf. Mikkelsen 1997. The recently discovered settlement of Kellis in the Dakhla oasis provides exciting evidence of a rural Manichaean community including rich documentation of the everyday occupations, business activities and religious beliefs of early Manichaeans (the site was abandoned as early as the late fourth century CE), cf. Alcock, Funk and Gardner 1999; Alcock and Gardner 1999.

⁵⁶ Lefort 1948: 166.

written texts.⁵⁷ In 1949, immediately after the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, Jean Doresse claimed that the Gnostic movement was the main protagonist in favour of the newly created written language.⁵⁸ But the linguistic varieties attested in these Gnostic texts are by no means as primitive⁵⁹ and the manuscripts not as old as Doresse presumed they were.⁶⁰ In 1950 Georg Steindorff wanted to give the palm to what he called 'orthodox Christianity'⁶¹ – an entity however that remains difficult to define before the fifth century CE. In 1970 Siegfried Morenz brought a synthetic view to the issue: it was the synergetic efforts of all these late antique *Buchreligionen*, he argued, competing with each other in the fields of religion, but collaborating in the linguistic realm, that brought forward the new language and writing system, additionally supported by the need for fully vocalised spells in the realm of magic.⁶² The model of Morenz surely comes closest to the whole spectrum of pre- and early Coptic evidence and seems to be the one that best suits the high complexity of sociolinguistic conditions and religious trends in third- to fourth-century CE Egyptian society. In 1993 this same idea was adopted by Roger Bagnall in his profound cultural history of late antique Egypt.⁶³ I believe, however, that the needs of everyday written communication should be emphasised a little more, at least as a catalyst accelerating the rise of the Coptic *Schriftkultur*. As can be shown from papyrological evidence, the countdown for the decline of Egyptian writing systems actually started in the realm of everyday texts: already in the second century CE, Demotic, once the epistolographic script *par excellence*, was finally expelled by Greek from its former domain of legal, business and private correspondence and was being transformed first into a literary, and finally into a merely religious idiom.⁶⁴ From about 100 CE until the emergence of Coptic, it was nearly impossible to correspond in the Egyptian vernacular: during a period of almost 200 years, an Egyptian native speaker not conversant with Greek had to hire a translator even to write and read letters.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Cf. Luisier 1998. According to a common assumption, the Septuagint Greek version of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings had ceased to be used by Jewish communities in the third century CE.

⁵⁸ Doresse 1949: 139.

⁵⁹ For the Coptic varieties in the Nag Hammadi codices, partially attesting inner-Coptic inter-dialectal translations, see Funk 1995.

⁶⁰ Papyrus pasteboards used by antique bookbinders to strengthen some of the preserved book covers of the Nag Hammadi codices contained dated documents up to the forties of the fourth century CE, cf. Barns, Browne and Shelton 1981.

⁶¹ Steindorff 1950. ⁶² Morenz 1970. ⁶³ Bagnall *Egypt*: 235–40.

⁶⁴ On the obsolescence of Demotic cf. Zauzich 1983; cf. also Lewis 1993; Cruz-Uribe 2002; Muhs 2005.

⁶⁵ This conclusion was drawn by Clarysse 1993.

Religious distribution of languages in Egypt around 300 CE

As soon as Coptic existed as a new written language, its use was exclusively restricted to Christian milieus in a wide sense, including also Gnostic and Manichaean communities, as already mentioned. Before the religious legislation of Emperor Theodosius the Great started to suppress pagan milieus and their public representation, several written languages with significant religious distribution were used in Egypt. Pagan Egyptians continued to use hieroglyphic writing systems. The last evidence of this is given by a memorial stela for the divine bull Buchis erected in 341 CE under the reign of Constantius II, but dated in the regnal year 59 of Diocletian, the last powerful defender of pagan cults against the rise of Christianity.⁶⁶ The last graffito at the temple of Isis at Philae written in hieroglyphs is dated (according to regnal years of Diocletian as well) to 394 CE.⁶⁷ Demotic, finally elevated to the rank of *Hiera grammata* of old Egyptian religion and magic, is still attested in four extensive magical manuals written around 300, and in a series of graffiti at Philae, the latest one⁶⁸ dated in 452 CE. The most recent Old-Coptic text copies were written by pagan contemporaries of early users of Coptic. However, the use of hieroglyphic writing systems during and after the fourth century may have been a pious and learned *Glasperlenspiel*, while the common linguistic medium of pagan communication in Egypt, both written and spoken, had long since become Greek. The latter is seen to work as a lingua franca also in religious matters. It could be used by any partisans of Greco-Roman or Egyptian pagan cults as well as by Christians of all varieties,⁶⁹ Gnostics,⁷⁰ and Manichaeans.⁷¹

Conclusion

To sum up: the origins of Coptic can be traced back into pre-Christian times. Greek–Egyptian cultural and linguistic contact forms the background of both the change in the writing system and the language change which particularly affected the vocabulary. A couple of extant Old-Coptic

⁶⁶ Grenier 1983. ⁶⁷ Griffith 1937: 126–7, graffito Philae no. 436.

⁶⁸ Griffith 1937: 102–3, graffito Philae no. 365.

⁶⁹ For the ongoing use of Greek by Copts and its importance for the liturgy of the Coptic Church, cf. Budde 2002; MacCoull 2004; and Papaconstantinou in this volume.

⁷⁰ It should be emphasised that almost all Coptic Gnostic texts from the Nag Hammadi assemblage and elsewhere are considered (and some of them can clearly be proved) to be translations from Greek originals.

⁷¹ The most famous document is the fifth-century CE codex inv. 4780 from the Cologne papyrus collection, cf. Koenen and Römer 1985; Koenen and Römer 1988.

texts, insignificant by number but highly instructive by the fair degree of standardisation and the variety of systems which they show, provide strong evidence of a formerly broad stream of attempts to write Egyptian by means of a mixed alphabet combining Greek with Egyptian signs. By the end of the third century CE those attempts, originally developed in pagan milieus, encountered the efforts of late antique *Buchreligionen*, first of all Christianity, to transgress the linguistic borderline of a Greek-speaking audience in order to propagate their messages in the peripheral areas of Egypt. Grafting the principles of Old-Coptic onto a grammatically and lexically modern standard of the Egyptian language, the protagonists of these new religions gathered the crop of a seed which had ripened and grown for a long time in the humus of an advanced literacy embedded in a bilingual context.

WATCHING THE FINAL STAGE OF COPTIC THROUGH THE MIRROR OF WRITTEN TEXTS

What does 'final stage of Coptic' mean?

Turning from the rise of the Coptic language to its decline, there is first the need to define what should be understood by 'the final stage of Coptic'. It implies the last stage of Coptic as a living language on a stable demographic base. So-called 'last speaker' phenomena⁷² like an eighty-year-old dumb man who was introduced to Jean Michel Vansleb in 1673 as allegedly having been able to speak Coptic,⁷³ as well as a supposed semi-speaker community in an Upper Egyptian village still discovered in the thirties of the twentieth century,⁷⁴ hence remain out of consideration here since at that time the Coptic language had contracted irreversibly both demographically and structurally. But even apart from such phenomena, the question of when the final stage of Coptic is to be fixed still remains difficult and disputed.⁷⁵

⁷² On that cf. the classic investigations by Dorian 1981; Dorian 1999; and cf. the overview on speaker typology given by Tsunoda 2005: 118–20.

⁷³ Vansleb 1677: 363. ⁷⁴ Vycichl 1936; doubts have been made by Peust 1999: 31.

⁷⁵ Sometimes the administrative reform under the rule of 'Abd al-Malik, the fifth Umayyad caliph, is regarded as an attempt to push, or even a reply to the advanced, Arabization of Egypt, cf. e.g. Gellens 1991: 937a–b: 'Arabization is, in fact, of crucial importance for the Islamization of Egypt, especially in contrast to, for example, Iran... In this regard, the Arabization of the administration and coinage during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik (685–705) may be seen, in the Egyptian case at least, as a harbinger of conversion. 'Abd al-Malik's decrees were a response, in part, to the increasing Arabization of the Copts, a process in no small way due to the gradual arrival of Arab tribesmen in areas once wholly Coptic and Christian.' This assumption may be true of Syria, although translations of Syriac literature into Arabic trace back to the early ninth century. In Egypt, however, the preference for Arabic in administrative writing mainly affected the

Arabic texts written by Christian authors

A significant date is provided by the emergence of Arabic texts written by Christian authors. The earliest Egyptian author known to have composed Christian theological treatises in Arabic is Sâwîrus ibn al-Muqaffa', who lived in the tenth century CE.⁷⁶ Recent research, however, no longer considers his language choice to be a simple response to the fact that by that time his Christian audience was made up mainly of Arabic speakers.⁷⁷ Rather, it is seen as his attempt to introduce Christian arguments into the theological discourse of Arabic-speaking Muslim theologians. If it was truly in this context that Coptic proved dysfunctional – namely as an intellectual tool appropriate for discussing minute theological issues and putting forward Christian apologetics – this would make a difference of some importance for estimating the actual stage of language obsolescence. But only two or three generations later, by the mid-eleventh century CE, the great process of 'translating the tradition'⁷⁸ began its initial stage, starting with some groping, provisional Arabic translations of single biblical and liturgical books and a few selected canonical and hagiographical texts, but already completed around 1300 CE with a complete revised Arabic Bible and Arabic versions of large parts of the dogmatic, patristic and canonical heritage, commentaries on biblical books, the festal calendar (the so-called Synaxarion) and the history of the patriarchs carried on in later times. From the twelfth century CE biblical manuscripts are often bilingual, combining a Coptic with an Arabic version.⁷⁹ The arrangement of two parallel text versions on one page usually shows a broad and elaborate Coptic column, while the Arabic column is kept as small as possible, looking like an unimportant marginal note. Captions of illuminations however were mostly produced in Arabic only. The thirteenth century was the time of an emerging Coptic philology, materialising in two types of tools:⁸⁰ Coptic–Arabic dictionaries (so-called *salâlim*)⁸¹ and Coptic grammars written in Arabic (so-called

chancelleries' routine, and even there, as can be shown from papyrological evidence, Greek (and Coptic) continued to be used.

⁷⁶ Precisely 905–87 CE, cf. Griffith 1996.

⁷⁷ Den Heijer 1999. But cf. e.g. Cannuyer 1996: 112: 'À partir du dixième siècle, la majorité des Chrétiens d'Égypte ne comprenant déjà plus le copte, leurs lettres vont se mettre à écrire en arabe.'

⁷⁸ The title of the pioneering study by Rubenson 1996; cf. Sidarus 2002.

⁷⁹ One of the earliest bilingual manuscripts is the Gospel of John in the Bodleian Library, Ms. Huntington 17 from the year 1173/4 CE.

⁸⁰ Cf. the introduction in Bauer 1972; Sidarus 1977: 27b–28a; Müller 1990.

⁸¹ Cf. Munier 1930; Vycichl 1991b; Sidarus 1998; Sidarus 2000; Khouzam 2002.

muqaddimât).⁸² The earliest compositions of such works are attributed to John Sammanûdi who worked around 1235 CE; the last contributions are due to Athanasius of Qûs, who flourished in the fourteenth century.⁸³

The completion of the translation of Christian traditional literature into Arabic *grosso modo* before 1300 and the simultaneous emergence of tools for teaching and learning Coptic as a second language provide us with an approximate date for the advanced contraction of Coptic language, at least among educated Copts.

Coptic–Arabic 'Karshouni'

The evidence of an advanced stage of language loss comes also from thirteenth-century Coptic–Arabic writing experiments.⁸⁴ A manuscript containing a collection of *apophthegmata* bears witness to Coptic 'Karshouni' – the practice of writing Arabic with Coptic alphabetic signs.⁸⁵ This kind of 'hybrid' writing might have been appropriate for somebody accustomed to speaking Arabic, who nevertheless wanted (and was still able) to read and write Coptic – be it because of their education or, more likely, because of the higher prestige of the Coptic script in certain fields of Christian religious practice. On the other hand, a collection of hymns in honour of the Virgin Theotokos Mary was written in the Coptic dialect of Lower Egypt, but with Arabic letters.⁸⁶ Such an aid must have been indispensable for somebody wanting to utter Coptic words if they were educated in Arabic only.

Last texts composed in Coptic language

Biblical and liturgical manuscripts were copied – at least in the Lower Egyptian dialect – still long after the death of Coptic. However, there are some literary and semi-literary text compositions that provide us with more reliable information about how long Coptic texts could still be *produced*, not only copied and read. The most long-lived genres of Coptic texts, composed until the thirteenth and even fourteenth century in the

⁸² Cf. Bauer 1972; Vycichl 1991a; Sidarus 2001. ⁸³ Cf. Müller 1990: 277–8.

⁸⁴ On this phenomenon cf. generally Worrell 1934: 134–43; Satzinger 1972; and Blau 1988.

⁸⁵ A minor portion was published by Casanova 1901, the main part by Sobhy 1926; a gleaning by Burmester 1965–6. See also the linguistic studies by Blau 1988: 145–94 and Satzinger 1972.

⁸⁶ Galtier 1906. Unfortunately, there is no photograph of this manuscript, which itself is missing, so it seems impossible to give a reliable dating. For our argument here the text would be relevant only if its dating is not too long after the thirteenth century.

Upper Egyptian dialect, are scribal colophons, inscriptions and graffiti. These texts are characterised by brevity and highly standardised formulas, requiring a minimum of variable details. Moreover, in a sense they have no need for a real reader (cf. above, 'Functional domains of languages and the difference between spoken and written languages'). Their longevity strongly recalls the latest hieroglyphic and Demotic text compositions likewise attested in the medium of epigraphy (cf. above, 'Religious distribution of languages in Egypt around 300 CE').⁸⁷ However there are still examples of more extensive text compositions from that late period of Coptic. One of them, the Martyrdom of John of Phanijoit, a text most likely composed in Bohairic (the Coptic dialect of Lower Egypt), is dated to 1211 CE, the year of its protagonist's death.⁸⁸ An even more amazing phenomenon is the early fourteenth-century poem called 'Triadon' with reference to the Arabic rhyme pattern *muthallath* which it follows.⁸⁹ Its language is an intentionally 'classical' if actually archaistic and artificial Sahidic Coptic. There are but few pieces of evidence of a limited 'active' use of written Coptic even centuries later, but they cannot be considered applications of a living language.⁹⁰ If the end of the final stage of language loss of Coptic is thus roughly fixed around 1300 CE, the next question to be raised is: when did the language obsolescence start? Here Coptic documentary evidence can be helpful. Non-literary texts prove particularly important in indicating the steady progress of language change for two reasons: first, in principle, they are usually written in a language of less restricted orthography, hence assimilating current norms of the spoken language.⁹¹ Second, the step-by-step abandonment of Coptic in non-literary types of texts provides us with significant benchmarks in a chronology and also a 'topography' of language obsolescence: the pragmatic context of these texts is so closely connected with everyday matters that language choice in these fields might suffer a strong impact from the spoken language used in daily communication. In the realm of legal affairs, a decisive break occurs as early as the mid-ninth century CE.⁹² Coptic legal documents written after 800 CE

⁸⁷ Cf. Zauzich 1983.

⁸⁸ This important text has enjoyed increasing attention in recent years and has been re-edited and commented on now by Zaborowski 2005; cf. Amélineau 1887; Takla 1999; MacCoull 2000.

⁸⁹ Von Lemm 1903b; Nagel 1983; MacCoull 1991; Helderma 1997; Helderma 2002.

⁹⁰ E.g. a Bohairic inscription at the monastery of Mâr Bolos at the Red Sea dating from year 1429 of the Martyrs = 1713 CE, ed. Wreszinski 1902; *P.Ryl.Copt.* 461, a Bohairic letter written by a bishop of Abutig near Assiut, dating from around 1800 CE.

⁹¹ Cf. Maynor 1988; Meurman-Solin 1999; Schneider 2002.

⁹² Cf. Richter *Rechtsssemantik*: 154–65; Richter 2001.

are very rare. A more elaborate Coptic legal language is attested for the last time in a monastic archive of sale documents dating from 833 to 850 CE.⁹³ The few Coptic legal texts issued later, from the mid-ninth until the mid-eleventh century,⁹⁴ show a laconic brevity and poverty in clauses, surely to be considered a loss of function.⁹⁵ Instead, from about 900 CE even Coptic speakers seem to have used more and more Arabic legal records, like the famous tenth-century marriage contracts involving explicitly Christian parties that were published by Nabia Abbott in 1941.⁹⁶ And even *Coptic* records of this time reveal the common practice of using Arabic in legal and business affairs, since their terminology is patterned according to words and phrases of contemporary Arabic legal documents.⁹⁷ Documentary texts also bear evidence for a period of transition, indicated by the coexistence of different states of language obsolescence under nearly identical circumstances. Within the same region (the Middle Egyptian Fayyum oasis), at the same time (mid-eleventh century), a monastery's agricultural activities were recorded in a paper account book (BL Or. 13885) written in late Fayyumic Coptic, admittedly larded with Arabic loanwords,⁹⁸ while a recently discovered assemblage of Arabic papers from the Fayyumic monastery of Deir el-Naqlûn bears witness to the use of Arabic for the very same purpose.⁹⁹

⁹³ Krause 1958; MacCoull 1994.

⁹⁴ The latest Coptic legal documents, belonging to the so-called Teshlot archive, are dated from 1022 to 1063, cf. Richter 2003b. Two marriage contracts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do not provide testimony of a continuing development of Coptic legal language until that time; as their style is archaising and literary, they presumably were drawn up merely for solemnity, cf. Richter *Rechtssemantik*: 164–5. Also late Coptic letters, lists and accounts stop occurring after the eleventh century.

⁹⁵ Richter *Rechtssemantik*: 160; cf. Crystal 2000: 83: 'each loss of a domain . . . is a loss of vocabulary, discourse pattern, and stylistic range'.

⁹⁶ Abbot 1941. To the best of my knowledge, the papyrological evidence of Christians acting as drafters and addressees of Arabic documents has not been studied hitherto. But cf. Reinhardt 1897; Anawati and Jomier 1954; Frantz-Murphy 1981: 221–3; Frantz-Murphy 1993; and Björnesjö 1996. Diem 2004: 10: 'Bekanntlich unterlagen im Islam der Vormoderne Christen und Juden ihrer eigenen Gerichtsbarkeit, was auch die Beurkundung von Immobilienverkäufen einschloß. Dennoch sind Beurkundungen von Immobilientransaktionen zwischen Christen bzw. zwischen Juden durch muslimische Richter keineswegs eine Seltenheit.'

⁹⁷ Cf. e.g. Richter 2003b.

⁹⁸ I owe all my knowledge of this still unpublished document from the former Michaélidès collection to the late Sarah Clackson; her transcription forms the base of an edition to be published by Georg Schmelz (Mannheim/Heidelberg) and myself. The date of the text can be proved by prosopographic connections discovered by Lennart Sundelin (personal communication). According to information given by Grohmann 1954: 251, addendum to p. 158, l. 17, the paper account book BL Or. 13885 would originate from Deir el-Naqlûn too, and could be dated to 1039 CE, but the reasons for these assumptions remain unclear.

⁹⁹ This text was dealt with by Christian Gaubert at the Third Conference of the International Society for Arabic Papyrology, 'Documents in the Early Islamic World', at Alexandria, 23–6 March 2006, in his workshop 'Compatibilité au monastère de Naqlun'.

Arabic loanwords in Coptic texts

As a matter of course, the occurrence of lexical and grammatical borrowing forms an important criterion for estimating the degree of penetration of one language by another. However, to observe Coptic–Arabic language contact through the mirror of linguistic interference phenomena is simply to ‘see through a glass darkly’. The language level maintained by all kinds of Coptic literary texts entirely denies the encounter with the Arabic language – lexical borrowings from Arabic do not occur at all. This is true of the proper stock of Holy Scriptures, copied by well-trained scribes with all due care, where an impact of current language change is not to be expected. But it is also true of the vast number of literary texts transmitted in a much more open tradition, like narratives of saints and martyrs, homilies, theological treatises and canonical literature. They are all subject to a linguistic decorum which demanded the denial of phonetic, grammatical and lexical innovations of language change.¹⁰⁰ Even some extant pieces of so-called ‘Coptic folk literature’¹⁰¹ – ninth- and tenth-century songs, poems and narratives outside traditional literary patterns and styles – do not show any lexical or higher level influence of Arabic, even though their language comes close to the language of non-literary texts, that is, to the vernacular. In fact, there are only two kinds of Coptic texts containing any Arabic loanwords at all: first, scientific (technical or educational) writings, and, secondly, documentary texts. At present, there is no glossary of these words, but a glossary *in statu nascendi* comprises about 400 Arabic *lemmata* from c. 100 Coptic texts dating from the eighth to the twelfth centuries.¹⁰²

The vast number of Arabic loanwords comes from the first group, nearly a score of ninth- to eleventh-century manuscripts, among which we find a couple of alchemical treatises,¹⁰³ a manual providing arithmetical and

¹⁰⁰ To the best of my knowledge, the only exception from this rule is the latest hagiographical composition in Coptic language, the above-mentioned late Bohairic Martyrdom of John of Panijôit from 1211 CE (cf. above, n. 88), which contains a handful of Arabic terms.

¹⁰¹ Erman 1897; Junker 1910–11.

¹⁰² Cf. Richter 2006. As far as I know, any higher level borrowings from Arabic have not been observed in Coptic texts until now. However, the issue is completely unresearched, and was properly raised for the first time, I believe, by Zaborowski 2005: 133–5.

¹⁰³ Stern 1885: 102–19 = Crum 1905: 175, no. 374 and three unpublished texts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ms. copt. a.1, 2 and 3), of which I am about to prepare an edition, cf. my first report: ‘The Master Spoke: “Take One of the *Sun* and One Measure of *Almulgam*”’: Hitherto Unnoticed Coptic Papyrological Evidence for Early Arabic Alchemy’, paper presented at the Third Conference of the International Society for Arabic Papyrology, ‘Documents in the Early Islamic World’, at Alexandria, 23–6 March 2006.

Table 17.10 *Arabic loanwords in Coptic scientific manuscripts*

Astronomical terms		
ⲁⲗⲉⲓⲥⲓⲥ	(<i>al-ḡady</i>)	<i>Capricorn</i>
ⲁⲘⲘⲁⲣⲁⲧⲁⲁⲛ	(<i>al-saraṭān</i>)	<i>Cancer</i>
ⲁⲘⲘⲟⲩⲩⲣⲉ	(<i>al-zuhara</i>)	<i>Venus</i>
Ⲙⲟⲩⲩⲁⲁⲗ	(<i>zuḥal</i>)	<i>Saturn</i>
Mathematical terms		
(ⲁⲗ)ⲡⲉⲉⲡ	(<i>al-bāb</i>)	<i>method</i> (lit.: <i>door</i>)
ⲁⲗⲭⲟⲩⲩⲱⲡ	(<i>al-kusūr</i>)	<i>fraction</i>
Plants, spices		
ⲁⲗⲃⲟⲩⲗⲃⲟⲩⲗ	(<i>al-fulful</i>)	<i>pepper</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲁⲃⲱⲡ	(<i>al-kāfūr</i>)	<i>camphor</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲁⲁⲙⲙⲟⲩⲛ	(<i>al-kammūn</i>)	<i>cumin</i>
ⲁⲘⲘⲓⲛⲉⲙⲙⲗ	(<i>al-zingābīl</i>)	<i>ginger</i>
Minerals & chemicals		
ⲁⲗⲙⲟⲩⲩⲱⲉ	(<i>al-mūmiyā</i>)	<i>asphalt</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲓⲡⲣⲓⲧ	(<i>al-kibrīt</i>)	<i>sulphur</i>
ⲁⲛⲛⲟⲩⲩⲁⲧⲉⲣ	(<i>al-nūšādir</i>)	<i>sal-ammoniac</i>
ⲁⲘⲘⲉⲣⲛⲙⲩⲩ	(<i>al-zirnīḥ</i>)	<i>arsenic</i>
ⲁⲘⲘⲓⲡⲁⲕ	(<i>al-zībaq</i>)	<i>quicksilver</i>
Diseases		
ⲁⲗⲩⲱⲙⲙⲉ	(<i>al-ḥummayā</i>)	<i>fever</i>
ⲁⲛⲛⲓⲕⲣⲙⲥ	(<i>al-niqris</i>)	<i>gout, arthritis</i>

metrological problems,¹⁰⁴ a page on astronomical constellations¹⁰⁵ and collections of magical¹⁰⁶ and medical¹⁰⁷ recipes. In these texts we meet Arabic designations of planets and constellations, plants and spices, minerals and chemicals, mathematical terms and names of diseases (cf. examples in Table 17.10). Their linguistic significance is hard to estimate, but there is some reason to doubt the conclusion drawn by Werner Vycichl: 'The spoken language was full of Arabic words, as one can see from a medical papyrus or a treatise on alchemy,'¹⁰⁸ since the vast bulk of the Arabic words occurring in these texts are technical terms that are far from vernacular vocabulary. Rather, they belong to the above-mentioned taxonomic type of vocabulary

¹⁰⁴ Drescher 1948–9. ¹⁰⁵ Bouriant 1904; von Lemm 1903a 34–6.

¹⁰⁶ In particular, the manuscript edited by Chassinat 1955.

¹⁰⁷ In particular, the large manuscript edited by Chassinat 1921.

¹⁰⁸ Vycichl 1991c.

Table 17.11 *Arabic loanwords in Coptic documentary texts I: technical terms*

Taxation		
ⲁⲗⲒⲁⲡⲁⲓ	(<i>al-ḥarāǧī</i>)	<i>taxation year</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲁⲗⲙⲃ	(<i>al-ḥālīfa</i>)	<i>revenue officer</i>
Accounting terms		
ⲁⲗⲖⲉⲓⲧ	(<i>al-fā'ida</i>)	<i>profit</i>
ⲁⲗⲒⲁⲥⲉⲗ	(<i>al-ḥaṣā'il</i>)	<i>earnings</i>
ⲁⲗⲉⲟⲩⲙⲉ	(<i>al-ǧummā'</i>)	<i>amount</i>
ⲛⲁⲃⲁⲕⲁ	(<i>nafaqa</i>)	<i>expenses</i>
Weights, measures and currency		
ⲁⲗⲙⲁⲧⲕⲁⲗ	(<i>al-miṭqāl</i>)	(weight of one dīnār)
ⲁⲡⲡⲱⲡⲁ	(<i>al-ruḅ'</i>)	<i>quarter</i> (a measure)
ⲁⲉⲣⲒⲁⲙ	(<i>dirham</i>)	<i>dirham</i>
ⲧⲁⲛⲉⲕ	(<i>dānaq</i>)	$\frac{1}{6}$ <i>dirham</i>
Officials, epithets and titles		
ⲁⲗⲕⲁⲉⲓⲧ	(<i>al-qā'id</i>)	<i>commander</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲁⲩⲗⲉ	(<i>al-kauly</i>)	<i>overseer</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲉⲑⲓⲡ	(<i>al-kātib</i>)	<i>scribe</i>
ⲁⲙⲓⲣⲁ	(<i>amīr</i>)	<i>commander</i>
Legal terms		
ⲁⲗⲙⲓⲣⲉⲧ	(<i>al-mīrāt</i>)	<i>heritage</i>
ⲁⲗⲒⲁⲧ	(<i>al-ḥadd</i>)	<i>border</i> (of an estate)
ⲁⲗⲕⲁⲡⲉⲗⲉ	(<i>al-qabāla</i>)	<i>tenancy</i>
ⲁⲩⲩⲛ	(<i>dayn</i>)	<i>debt of money</i>

with an internal structure of its own and special rules of borrowability (cf. above, 'Greek loanwords in Demotic'). To be sure, I do not doubt that the spoken language had been enriched by a considerable number of Arabic words at this time. But even taking this for granted, I doubt those words would have been the Arabic words attested in this kind of Coptic texts.

The second group of texts with Arabic loanwords comprises about eighty documents including letters, lists, accounts and legal records of the eighth to twelfth centuries CE.¹⁰⁹ Here we meet Arabic book-keeping terms, official titles, terms for taxes, weights and measures, names of coins and currencies and legal terms (see examples in Table 17.11), as well as

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Richter 2004.

Table 17.12 *Arabic loanwords in Coptic documentary texts II: diverse items*

Containers and vessels		
ⲁⲗⲕⲁⲣⲟⲟⲣⲉ	(<i>al-qārūra</i>)	<i>flask</i>
ⲁⲗⲕⲁⲧⲁⲗ	(<i>al-qadah</i>)	<i>cup</i>
ⲁⲗⲡⲣⲓⲕ	(<i>al-'ibriq</i>)	<i>can</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲙⲣⲛⲓⲧ	(<i>al-karnīb</i>)	<i>bowl</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲟⲩⲥ	(<i>al-kūz</i>)	<i>jug</i>
Textiles and clothes		
ⲁⲗⲙⲁⲗⲁⲃⲉ	(<i>al-milḥafa</i>)	<i>wrap</i>
ⲁⲗⲙⲓⲃⲁⲡ	(<i>al-mi' ḡar</i>)	<i>cap</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲁⲥ	(<i>al-ḥazz</i>)	<i>silk fabric</i>
ⲁⲗⲭⲓⲙⲁⲣ	(<i>al-ḥimār</i>)	<i>veil</i>
ⲁⲗⲗⲁⲣⲙⲣⲉ	(<i>al-ḥarīra</i>)	<i>silk</i>
ⲁⲧⲧⲓⲡⲁⲥ	(<i>al-dibāq</i>)	<i>brocade</i>
ⲁⲧⲧⲓⲣⲁⲥ	(<i>al-tirāz</i>)	<i>embroidery</i>
ⲙⲁⲛⲧⲙⲁⲗ	(<i>mandil</i>)	<i>towel</i>

designations of diverse things, especially vessels, textiles and clothes (see examples in Table 17.12). Probably also these words might not match an average word selection from contemporary vernacular vocabulary. Obviously most of them were terminological as well, i.e. they could not be translated. And even words designating household articles were probably not borrowed in order to express simple concepts like flask, cup, can, bowl, jug, etc. but might have implied some distinct semantic values, like 'trademarks' referring to specific qualities of the respective articles 'flask, cup', etc. If most Arabic words attested in written Coptic had terminological meanings untranslatable in any way, their occurrence does not bear witness to a mixed language but rather has to do with certain matters of discourse which were closely connected with concepts and things that could be referred to only – or at least in the most suitable way – by Arabic terms. That means, even in the few Coptic texts containing Arabic loanwords, that the long-standing language contact between Coptic and Arabic and the beginning of the language shift left only scant traces. A comparison with pre-Coptic written Egyptian should not be ignored here. Just as the Hellenisation of the Egyptian language had been rejected by almost all kinds of hieroglyphic texts and stylistic registers, with the exception of a few special terms occurring mainly in Demotic documentary texts and in newly composed magical and medical texts when forced by semantic needs, Coptic literary registers rejected Arabic loanwords

and the few non- and semi-literary registers allowed only a few Arabic terms. We find the same grammatical class, the noun, representing the vast amount of instances, and almost the same semantic fields being borrowed from: titles, metrology, numismatics, taxes, etc. in the documents, nomenclature vocabulary in the scientific texts. But why did the contact of the Egyptian language with Greek lead to stable bilingualism and *maintenance* of the Egyptian vernacular, whereas the contact with Arabic resulted in the *death* of the Egyptian vernacular and its *replacement* by Arabic? At the moment, the reasons are largely unknown. Going on to deal with this issue, I start by quoting contemporary Christian witnesses that tell us something – although in somewhat different ways – about the process of obsolescence of the Coptic language in early medieval Egypt.

OBSCOLESCENCE AND LOSS OF THE COPTIC LANGUAGE:
CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONIES

A few contemporary considerations on the language-loss of Coptic have come down to us, each of them putting emphasis on different aspects and maintaining different attitudes towards it.¹¹⁰

First witness: Pseudo-Samuel of Qalamûn, apocalyptic

An eleventh(?)-century Arabic(!) apocalyptic work using the pseudonym of the seventh-century monk Samuel of Qalamûn claimed against his contemporaries:¹¹¹

They are abandoning their beautiful Coptic language, in which the Holy Spirit has spoken many times through the mouths of the holy spiritual fathers, and they are teaching their children from infancy to speak the language of the Arabs... Even the priests and monks – they as well – dare to speak in Arabic... and that within the sanctuary!... O my beloved children, what shall I say in these times, when readers in the Church do not understand what they are reading, or what they are saying, because they have forgotten their language? These truly are miserable people, deserving of being wept over, because they have forgotten their language and speak the language of the *hijra*... Many books of the Church shall fall into disuse, because there shall not remain among [the Christians] anyone who is concerned with [these] books, because their hearts shall incline to the Arabic books... When Christians shall dare to speak the language of the *hijra* right

¹¹⁰ Similar testimonies (like the famous lamentations of Alvarus of Cordoba) are known from medieval Spain, raising the same difficulties of interpretation, cf. Gallego 2003; Wasserstein 1991. For a contemporary example, cf. Jocks 1998.

¹¹¹ Ziadeh 1915–17; cf. Troupeau 1993; Iskander 1998; van Lent 1998; van Lent 1999; Zaborowski 2003.

at the altar they are blaspheming against the Holy Spirit and the Trinity: seven times Woe to them!¹¹²

It is a most remarkable feature of this testimony that Coptic is proclaimed here to be a holy language, hallowed by the Holy Spirit's utterances through the medium of Coptic-speaking saints and thus honoured to be the only authentic language of Christianity – at least in Egypt. This opinion is in striking contrast with the common Christian attitude held by missionaries in ancient and modern times (and also by Pseudo-Samuel's Egyptian contemporaries, cf. below) towards the translation of the Scriptures into the vernaculars. In fact it was due to this very attitude that the Egyptian language itself, the former idiom of those most disdained worshippers of animals,¹¹³ had once become a Christian language. In fact, our zealot grumbling about the 'language of the *hijra*' seems to be influenced by the Islamic view on this issue: the claim of an essential connection between the true content and the authentic language of revelation which it is not possible to dissolve without a considerable loss of truth and efficacy.

Second witness: Pseudo-Sāwirus ibn al-Muqaffā', theologian

In the foreword of an eleventh-century Arabic treatise entitled 'The Book of Illumination' (*Kitab al-Idāh*), wrongly attributed to Sāwirus ibn al-Muqaffā',¹¹⁴ the author points to the increasing difficulty of speaking about the *theologoumenon* of the divine trinity:

I tell you that the reason for the concealment of this mystery from the believers at this time is their mingling with the *ḥunafā'* [i.e. the Muslims], and the disappearance of their language, through which they know the truth of their religion. It has come to be the case that they do not hear any mention of 'the Son of God' except in a metaphorical sense. Instead, most of what they hear is that God is *fard* [unique], *ṣamad* [eternal], and the rest of the language that those of the *ḥunafā'* use. The believers have become accustomed to this, and have been raised with it, so that the mention of 'the Son of God' has come to be difficult for them; they do not know any interpretation or meaning for it.¹¹⁵

Unlike the apocalyptic approach, the claim of Coptic here is that it qualifies as a Christian language not by virtue of an ontological relationship between language and religion, but because of its inventory of

¹¹² Translation according to Swanson 1998: 6.

¹¹³ About Christian polemics against Ancient Egyptian religions, see Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984: 1853–2000; 2337–57.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Swanson 1998: 8, n. 7: 'a Copt in (I believe) the 11th century'.

¹¹⁵ Translation according to Swanson 1998: 8–9.

suitable means of expression that are simply missing in Arabic. This view of Coptic as a 'language for special purposes', fit for uttering genuine Christian thought due to apt words etc., is not so unlike current ideas of LSP-linguistics.¹¹⁶ If the protagonists of the great eleventh- to thirteenth-century translation process were anathematised by Pseudo-Samuel's 'Sevenfold Woe!', their work should have been welcomed and justified by Pseudo-Sāwīrus, since their very genius was precisely to make the Arabic language fit for expressing Christian theological thought by creating and coining Arabic Christian terms.

Third witness: Athanasius of Qûs, language teacher

In the fourteenth century, Athanasius of Qûs, the author of *Qilādat al-taḥrīr fī 'ilm al-tafsīr* 'Necklace of Writing and Art of Translation', already looks back at the shift from Coptic to Arabic. In his presentation, the loss of Coptic was a kind of *malheur* within the totality of the divine language economy. The series of events, which he put into a narrative in order to justify his own teaching efforts, starts with the creation of man (Gen. 2). God, he says, had given Adam the Syriac (i.e. the Hebrew) language to speak. When the tower of Babel, planned by seventy-two philosophers, had been destroyed, there took place the well-known separation of languages (Gen. 11).¹¹⁷ Each of the twenty-five descendants of Sem, of the thirty-two descendants of Ham and of the fifteen descendants of Japhet was given his own language – a total of seventy-two (according to the account of peoples in Gen. 10), including only twenty written languages (Table 17.13). Thanks to God's revelation in Christ, this separation of peoples by their different languages could be overcome at Pentecost (Acts 20). Athanasius calls this crucial event of the language history 'the re-collection of the pearls of the necklace'. But this miraculous readjustment was realised not simply by reduction and reunion of the different languages into one universal language (i.e. on the *signifiant* level), but, much more ingeniously,¹¹⁸ by preaching the *same gospel in every language* (thus, on the *signifié* level as it were). Later on, Athanasius writes, the Egyptians 'have forgotten their language ... and it is very difficult for them to learn it'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ As a general introduction to the field of Languages for Special Purposes (LSP), see Hoffmann 2004.

¹¹⁷ About linguistic interpretations of Gen. 11 cf. e.g. the *opus magnum* by Borst 1957–63; Eco 1997: 21–37.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Eco 1997: 28. ¹¹⁹ Bauer 1972: 303–6; cf. Müller 1990.

Table 17.13 *Distribution of languages after the fall of the Tower of Babel according to Athanasius of Qûs (ed. Bauer 1972)*

	<i>Descendants of Sem</i>	<i>Descendants of Ham</i>	<i>Descendants of Japhet</i>
Spoken languages	25	32	15
Written languages	8	6	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syriac • Hebrew • Arabic • <i>ʿaḡami</i> • <i>fārisi</i> • Chaldaic • Indian • Chinese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coptic • Abyssinian • Nubian • Cilician • Palestinian • <i>qwbly</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek • Roman • Frankish • Armenian • <i>ḡurḡāni</i> • Andalusī

Conclusion: What is actually said?

These testimonies and some others likewise authenticated by the aura of their contemporary character have sometimes been interpreted as reliable, thorough depictions of the death of Coptic, a conclusion that is convincing only at first glance. Before drawing any conclusion, it seems important to consider what these statements bear witness to – and what not. Seen from a sociolinguistic point of view, they speak in categories that are much too imprecise and, what is even more vexing, they are silent about almost all data necessary for an appropriate description. When, for example, Athanasius says that 'the Egyptians' had forgotten 'their language' – who were these 'Egyptians' and what does 'their language' mean? Since it is simply impossible to imagine that *all* speakers of Coptic had *completely* abandoned their first language at the *same* time *all over* Egypt, we are missing crucial information about language choice and code switching in different socially marked situations, which speakers used to encounter in the twilight of language decline.¹²⁰ Just as in recent cases, investigated in empirical linguistic studies,¹²¹ so in Egypt too, language obsolescence and language shift may have affected different domains and speaker types in different ways and at different speeds, e.g. written and spoken language, different speech situations, speakers belonging to

¹²⁰ From the abundant literature, cf. e.g. Fishman 1965; Fishman 1972; Appel and Muysken 1987; Thomason and Kaufman 1988; Muysken 2000; Field 2002.

¹²¹ Cf. e.g. Dorian 1981.

different social groups, genders, ages, regions¹²² or types of settlements.¹²³ Yet there is a most conspicuous common feature among these testimonies, whether it is pointed out with a threat or merely with a gesture of pity: the obsolescence of Coptic is always charged to the Coptic speakers' own account; the Arabs are never accused of having a hand in it. Obviously, there was the common experience or overwhelming impression that Coptic speakers were willing to learn and to use Arabic on their own initiative.¹²⁴ In fact, this assumption would match the result of all studies that the decision between language maintenance and language shift essentially depends on the speakers' attitude towards their first language,¹²⁵ in other words, that the death of a language is much more often brought about by *suicide*, as it were, than by *murder*.¹²⁶

THE LANGUAGE DEATH OF COPTIC: SOME RECENT APPROACHES

The phenomena of obsolescence and death of Coptic are matters of concern to both Arabic and Coptic studies, and research on them has been done by both Arabists and Coptologists. So far we have but few studies *in medias res*.¹²⁷ I want to sketch here a couple of the more elaborate approaches.

In his pioneering study mentioned earlier, 'Translating the Tradition: Some Remarks on the Arabisation of the Patristic Heritage in Egypt', Samuel Rubenson described the self-interpretation of Coptic tradition in Arabic and its transmission across the border of language death as a

¹²² Even the Apocalypse of Ps.-Samuel admitted a more friendly language attitude of Upper Egyptian Coptic speakers towards their language.

¹²³ Cf. the overview on speaker classification by Tsunoda 2005: 117–33.

¹²⁴ Of course, already soon after the conquest of Egypt, the knowledge of Arabic might have held a 'door-keeper' position admitting only Arabic speakers to certain offices and institutions, but even this would not have hindered the use and maintenance of Coptic, e.g., within private domains.

¹²⁵ Grenoble and Whaley 1998b: 22–54, esp. 22; Bradley 2001; Tsunoda 2005: 59–62.

¹²⁶ Cf. Denison 1972; Campbell and Muntzel 1989; Aitchison 1993: 198–209; Crystal 2000: 76–88. The term and concept of language suicide have been challenged by Tsunoda 2005: 74–5: 'This term is misleading, the people in question do not really have choices in this regard. Also, this term has an unfair connotation of blaming the victim.' But this seems to be an inappropriate generalisation of colonial structures applying repressive language policies (dominant language pressure 'top-down', as called by Crystal: 'Pressure that can come from political, social, or economic sources... in the form of incentives, recommendations, or laws introduced by a government') and an underestimation of what Crystal called dominant language pressure 'bottom-up', working through 'fashionable trends or peer group pressures from within the society' (Crystal 2000: 78). The difference between these two ways resembles that of extortion vs. bribery, and the denunciation of languages, such as Arabic and English, as 'killer languages' is none the less unfair; cf. Versteegh 2001 and Crystal 2004.

¹²⁷ From the Arabists' side, cf. Anawati 1975; Garcin 1987; Décobert 1992; Rubenson 1996; from the Coptologists' side, cf. Simon 1936; MacCoull 1985; MacCoull 1989; Müller 1990; Helderma 1997 and Horn 1999.

most successful manoeuvre and a crucial step in maintaining cultural identity: 'The change of language for an entire culture and its heritage is an extremely important process and in this case a rather fast one, and it deserves much more attention from historians, theologians and linguists.'¹²⁸ In a more pessimistic vein, Leslie MacCoull did not attach any value to this Arabic continuation of Coptic tradition. In her eyes, translation was simply insufficient to save the culture, and the language shift was nothing other than, in the words of Jean-Pierre Péroncel-Hugoz, 'génocide culturel', since 'language was the carrier of the culture'.¹²⁹ Calling as her chief witness Pseudo-Samuel of Qalamûn, she said:¹³⁰ 'Formulations like those... surely speak against any hypothetical "cultural affinity" between conquerors and conquered.' But this argument seems to be inconsistent, because it was precisely this affinity that provoked Pseudo-Samuel's apocalyptic fury. In a second approach in 1989, entitled 'The Strange Death of Coptic *Culture*' even though it dealt with *language* death as well, MacCoull took a further step in the direction of Pseudo-Samuel, adopting his attitude fully and joining in his reproach against his people: 'There is much anthropological writing on the phenomenon of language death', she wrote,

but none of the theories I have ever encountered seems to fit what happened to Coptic: dialectal unintelligibility; restriction to a purely practical and rote-memorized monastic sphere of use; simple laziness... What did happen was that, for reasons which remain both unclear and unexplored, learning never became a holy act in Coptic culture. Learning for its own sake never became a thing of positive value. The comparison with Syriac and Armenian is sad.¹³¹

Leslie MacCoull's philippic surely rings true insofar as the decision between language maintenance or death does depend on the speakers' attitudes a great deal. However, her explanation may be too fixed upon literacy and intellectual applications of language, features which actually form only a small segment of language use. There is clear evidence that language maintenance is very possible in cases of merely *spoken* languages, and there is recent linguistic discussion on whether the existence of a written literature supports language maintenance or not, or, under

¹²⁸ Rubenson 1996: 14.

¹²⁹ MacCoull 1985: 61. For a similar view from the perspective of language ecology and language activism within recent *LMLS* linguistics, see, e.g., Woodbury 1993; Tsunoda 2005: chapter 10 and especially 10.4 (161–7), and authorised by his own experience, Jocks 1998: 230–3.

¹³⁰ MacCoull 1985: 66. ¹³¹ MacCoull 1989: 42.

certain conditions, might even be a point of destabilisation for endangered languages.¹³²

Christian Décobert's 1992 study 'Sur l'arabisation et l'islamisation de l'Égypte médiévale' provides the most extensive and thorough research on the issue under discussion. He, too, chose Pseudo-Samuel's apocalyptic composition as a starting point, but his aim was to describe sociolinguistic motivations which might have caused Egyptian Christians to abandon their native tongue. Directed by Pseudo-Samuel's denunciations, Décobert located a Christian milieu attracted by the culture and lifestyle of the Arabs. In the end, Décobert shares the view of his source, that Islamisation was the other side of Arabisation.

EXCURSUS: LANGUAGE DEATH FROM A SOCIOLINGUISTIC POINT OF VIEW

Since the 1980s, linguistic interest in the typology of genetics of language(s), language change and language contact has increased rapidly.¹³³ Consequently, as it were, language death and language shift emerged in the research of the 1990s.¹³⁴ Both the empirical data and the explosive force of the subject came not least from the current mass destruction of minority languages caused by globalisation. The hope was that a universal theory could work somehow as an instrument of early recognition and revitalisation of endangered languages.¹³⁵ As a matter of course, the refinement of linguistic description and analysis is of benefit also to merely written data from ancient evidence.¹³⁶

The opportunities and limits of a sociolinguistic approach are mirrored by a set of thirty-three issues (Table 17.14) which displays the correlation of variable cultural data related to language change (categorisation A) with categories forming its invariable social framework (categorisation B). This model was suggested by John Edwards in 1992 and has been improved by Leonore Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley, who have added some more subdivisions and made attempts to rank the variables involved, concluding that *economic factors* possibly cannot be overestimated.¹³⁷

¹³² Cf. Grenoble and Whaley 1998b: 31–42; Mühlhäusler 1990.

¹³³ From the abundant literature cf. e.g. Appel and Muysken 1987 and Thomason and Kaufman 1988.

¹³⁴ Cf. e.g. Dorian 1989; Brenzinger 1992; Aitchison 1993; Croft 2000; Crystal 2000; Janse, Tol and Hendriks 2003.

¹³⁵ Cf. e.g. Williamson 1991; Fase, Jaspaert and Kroon 1992; Grenoble and Whaley 1998a; and most recently Tsunoda 2005.

¹³⁶ Cf. most recently Adams, Janse and Swain *Bilingualism*.

¹³⁷ Edwards 1992; Grenoble and Whaley 1998b: 22–54. Cf. the overview on 'External setting of language endangerment' by Tsunoda 2005: 49–56.

Table 17.14 Variables of language change (Edwards 1992; Grenoble and Whaley 1998a)

Categorisation A	Categorisation B		
	Speaker	Language	Setting
<i>Demography</i>	1	2	3
<i>Sociology</i>	4	5	6
<i>Linguistics</i>	7	8	9
<i>Psychology</i>	10	11	12
<i>History</i>	13	14	15
<i>Politics/Law</i>	16	17	18
<i>Geography</i>	19	20	21
<i>Education</i>	22	23	24
<i>Religion</i>	25	26	27
<i>Economics</i>	28	29	30
<i>Technology</i>	31	32	33

SOME PROVISIONAL SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONCLUSIONS

Unable to treat here even a few of these thirty-three issues and to provide a complex and thorough suggestion concerning the language death of Coptic, I restrict myself to something much more modest: to applying Décobert's socio-historical approach to the above-mentioned evidence of Arabic loanwords in Coptic texts. The idea is that even a small quantity of loanwords, if analysed with attention to their sociolinguistic implications, may indicate certain typical speaker attitudes towards the culture which was carried by the source language. Here are some provisional assumptions drawn from this evidence:

1. The conspicuous incorporation of Arabic nomenclature vocabulary in Coptic astronomical, mathematical, alchemical and medical manuscripts indicates nothing but a *high esteem for Arabic natural science* current in educated circles of Egyptian Christian society. This was surely the same interest that we find also in the well-known medieval translations of Arabic scientific texts into Latin.
2. The borrowing of Arabic legal terms, phrases and clauses in late Coptic legal records seems to reflect *common commercial intercourse* between wealthy Arabic and Coptic speakers.
3. The above-average borrowing of Arabic words for vessels, textiles and clothes, which were thought above to be designations of particular qualities like 'trademarks', possibly points towards a common *need for Arabic luxury articles* in wealthy Christian houses.

To conclude: it seems to me that few of the reasons for the language death of Coptic are to be sought in the difference and interrelationship of religions. The language shift from Egyptian to Arabic did not 'override' the Christian tradition, but was accompanied, if not stimulated, by Christian scholars who themselves spoke and wrote Arabic as a second language. It is true that certain Christian religious practices, in particular the liturgy, were kept free from the use of Arabic, and little by little they became the last refuge for the Coptic (and also the Greek) language. But this development might justly be considered as a phenomenon of folklorisation, i.e. the restriction of an obsolescent language to certain domains not too closely connected with practical purposes and the matters of everyday life.¹³⁸ In the end, I believe that among all the factors forming part of the specific *setting* of the language shift from Coptic to Arabic, it was the increasing material and intellectual prosperity of Arabic culture which played a role that cannot be overestimated. In the perception of a majority of Christian elite representatives in medieval Egypt, Arabic may have figured not only as the language of the *Hijra*, but also – if not predominantly – as the language of *science*, the language of *advanced civilisation* and the language of *material wealth*.

In the preceding lines, I have tried to approach two crucial periods of contact-induced linguistic change in Egypt, keeping an eye on contemporary developments in the fields of religion. The Hellenisation of Egypt during Ptolemaic and Roman times, linguistically resulting in stable bilingualism and the maintenance of a last stage of the Egyptian language, the Coptic idiom, still needs much research. The same is true of the Arabisation of Egypt with its two aspects, the obsolescence and death of Coptic and the translation of Coptic literature into Arabic. In both cases, there is the same close weave of sociolinguistic patterns and patterns of religious change and conversion. All I have been able to do here is to lay out some relevant sources and issues and to sketch some recent approaches to interpreting and explaining relevant phenomena. My suggestions are merely provisional and remain to be tested by further evidence and future investigation.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Cf. Tsunoda 2005: 65–9. The term 'folklorisation', meaning the ousting of endangered languages from relevant and important functional domains under the impact of emerging bilingualism, was used by Fishman 1987.

¹³⁹ Postscript: A. Papaconstantinou's '"They Shall Speak the Arabic Language and Take Pride in it": Reconsidering the Fate of Coptic After the Arab Conquest', *Le Muséon* 120 (2007), 273–99, appeared too late for its conclusions to be incorporated into the present chapter. Papaconstantinou's close reading of relevant passages from the apocalypse of (Pseudo-)Samuel of Qalamun dealt with above (pp. 426–7) leads her to the conclusion that Pseudo-Samuel's complaints should be 'inserted in the context of a rift within the medieval Coptic church over the question of language choice, and beyond this, over that of accommodation with the Muslims', triggered by 'the use of Arabic by the episcopal church of Misr and by some prominent figures around it' (ibid. p. 299), in the last quarter of the 10th century.

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*'What remains behind': Hellenism and Romanitas
in Christian Egypt after the Arab conquest¹*

Arietta Papaconstantinou

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind

William Wordsworth²

When the Arabs conquered Egypt in 641, they found a deeply divided Christian church – in fact what they found amounted to two quite separate churches. They are usually called, in neutral terms, 'Chalcedonian' and 'anti-' or 'non-Chalcedonian', with reference to the Council of Chalcedon where their split had been consummated two centuries earlier.³ The two churches disagreed deeply on Christological questions, and during the two centuries that followed the Council, there were several, often heavy-handed, attempts to bring the non-Chalcedonian churches back into the imperial sphere. These events are unfortunately known mainly from polemical sources from both sides, and although this last fact does allow us to get a more balanced view, it also creates the impression that the Chalcedonian conflict dominated life in the Empire after the fifth century, an impression that certainly needs qualification.

In Egypt, the non-Chalcedonian or Monophysite church modelled itself on the highly centralised structure of the existing patriarchate of Alexandria, which, contrary to the other four patriarchates, did not have an intermediate level of metropolises between the patriarch and the local

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² 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'.

³ On the Council of Chalcedon and its aftermath Frend 1972 remains useful on facts and sources, despite the author's highly contested interpretation of the phenomenon. More recent, but not covering the post-Justinianic period, is Gray 2005.

bishops.⁴ Both churches had their leaders in Alexandria, heading two well-developed parallel networks of episcopal sees and affiliated monasteries which covered most of the valley. In 641, the Chalcedonian church had, for over a century, been actively backed by the imperial power structure, often forcing the non-Chalcedonian hierarchy to leave the city centres and retreat to monasteries from where they managed their communities.⁵ The political break with Constantinople brought about by the Arab conquest eventually weakened the position of the Chalcedonian Church. However, this outcome was not obvious from the start, and in the first decades after the conquest, the anti-Chalcedonian Church focussed most of their polemics not on Islam, but on their fellow Christians, the Chalcedonians.⁶ In classic Monophysite works such as the *Chronicle* by John of Nikiu or the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, the 'heresy' of the 'Romans' is given as the main reason for the loss of the province to the Arabs, while the upright faith of the 'Egyptians' is seen as the reason for the favour they found in the eyes of their new lords. It is striking that although the divide between the two groups was religious, they are described here in ethnic terms, a significant shift through which the anti-Chalcedonian authors came to identify their own church as the native one – the 'Coptic' Church – and the Chalcedonian Church as that of the 'foreigners'.⁷ This was but the last phase of a long process during which the Coptic language had gradually become associated with resistance to Chalcedon, while, until the conquest at least, Greek retained a more neutral status.

Most modern historians have fallen victim to this discourse, accepting in more or less critical terms the idea that, whatever problems they may have encountered under their new masters, Coptic-speaking Egyptian Christians, mostly of Monophysite denomination, were quite happy to get rid of the eastern Roman Empire and of the Greek-speaking Chalcedonians that went with it. However, several scholars have repeatedly pointed out that, according to documentary evidence, mainly that of papyri, less prone to the biased presentation of events typical of official histories, the religious divisions followed neither ethnic nor linguistic lines (the two

⁴ The formation and structure of the five late antique 'patriarchates' is described at length in Flusin 1998.

⁵ See Wipszycka 2007. This was also the case in Syria: see Debié 2004.

⁶ See for instance the episodes mentioned in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* 15 (Evetts 1910: 5–6 and 13–14) during the patriarchate of John of Samanud (681–9). The arrival of 'Abd al-'Aziz in 685 is presented by the *History of the Patriarchs* as a turning point after which the governors of Egypt marked a clear preference for the Monophysite Church. In the 760s, however, according to the same work, there were still cases of discord between the communities: *Hist. Patr.* 18 (Evetts 1910: 120–6).

⁷ See Papaconstantinou 2006, and the remarks in Décobert 2000: 24.

being far from synonymous), and that there was more concord among Greek and Coptic speakers and less inter-confessional conflict than the anti-Chalcedonian Church cared to admit.⁸ Papyri do give a very different image of Christian society under the Umayyads and the first Abbasids than the one we can extract from other contemporary texts. One may object that papyri from that period are mainly fiscal or legal documents, a fact which could be enough to explain the absence of any sign of ethnic or religious conflict. However, those texts do have a strongly cultural content and, looked at closely, they give much information on the society that produced them and on its cultural choices, even though they never make direct comments about the 'Greeks' or the 'Romans'.

Among other things, papyri have helped establish the extent to which Byzantine documentary and administrative practice continued well after the conquest, as well as the fact that Greek remained a language largely used by the administration, not least because, initially, Christian officials kept their positions.⁹ This has been possible through the study of a series of archives, pertaining primarily to the taxation system. Of these, the Aphrodito papyri from the early eighth century are the most important, because they link up with other documents all related to the governor Qurra ibn Sharik (709–15), and allow some insights into the relation between local and central government.¹⁰ From roughly the same period is the significant group of papyri from Edfū (Apollōnos Anō),¹¹ while from the second half of the seventh century there are groups of documents from Isnā (Herakleopolis) and al-Ashmūneyn (Hermopolis).¹²

From the period immediately following Qurra's governorship, the most significant group of papyri are some 130 Coptic legal documents from the archives of a monastery in the Theban region. Stretching from 713 to the 780s, they yield information on the legal and notarial practice, as well as on the social life of a small Christian community.¹³ Soon after their

⁸ The strongest case has been made by Wipszycka 1992. See also Winkelmann 1979 and Winkelmann 1984. For the period before Chalcedon see Bagnall *Egypt*: 251–60. The question of identity and allegiance in this period is complex, and involves much more than the usually cited religious and ethnic factors; an overview is given in Hoyland *Islam*: 17–26.

⁹ On administrative continuity, see Bell 1928, and his introduction to *P.Lond.* IV xvii–xli; on the process of replacement of Greek by Arabic in the administration see *ET*², s.v. 'Diwān, I'. See also Sijpesteijn 2004 and Sijpesteijn 2007.

¹⁰ A number of those texts are published in *P.Qurra*, *P.Ross.Georg.* IV and *P.Lond.* IV.

¹¹ See Gascou and Worp 1982.

¹² See for instance the documents published in *CPR* XXII, and the general presentation of early Islamic documentary sources therein, 1–16.

¹³ Initially published without a translation in Crum and Steindorff 1912; German translations in Till 1954 and Till 1964.

original publication in Coptic, the law historian Artur Steinwenter devoted several studies to those texts. To him, one of their greatest merits was that they served as proof of the persistence, over a century after the Arab conquest, of Byzantine notarial practice within Christian communities.¹⁴ Even though the original Greek formulae had often had to be translated into Coptic in order to be understood, he said, they remained so close to their model that it is possible to translate them back into Greek and obtain a legally acceptable text.¹⁵ The structure of the documents was also directly inherited from the east Roman *tabelliones*, and so were the 'norms and legal institutions they reveal to us'.¹⁶

To what extent is such structural continuity significant? All the above fields – taxation, administration, law – are notoriously conservative in their practice, and thus not the most telling when it comes to assessing the evolution of society. In the case of law, continuity of form is also quite natural given the legislative autonomy granted to Christian communities under Islam, although often the domain of civil law was at least partly incorporated in canon law collections.¹⁷ It is possible, however, to look at the same texts more closely from a different perspective, and to analyse them at a different level. They all contain a number of markers, independent of administrative or legal structures as such, that contrary to what the official discourse of rejection would have us believe, show a persistent cultural adherence to the model represented by the Byzantine Empire.

The continuing use of Greek in official documents is a case in point. To a certain extent it was rather natural, given the people with whom scribal, notarial and administrative activities rested. Greek scribal tradition was kept alive for some time by the Arabs themselves, not only in Egypt, but in all the ex-Roman provinces.¹⁸ It may however be seen as bearing greater significance as time went by, when it was no longer the language of bureaucracy and when traditional practice in Christian communities

¹⁴ Steinwenter 1920. ¹⁵ Steinwenter 1920: 2.

¹⁶ Steinwenter 1920: 2. Since Steinwenter's study, the relations of what has been called 'Coptic law' with its Roman and Egyptian (Demotic) predecessors have been at the centre of much debate, which need not concern us here; see the discussion in Richter *Rechtssemantik*: esp. 28–57. In fact, the very notion of Coptic law can be misleading, since it refers not to a distinct, unified body of legislation, but to the conclusions reached from the study of a series of independent archives from different places and times.

¹⁷ Edelby 2004.

¹⁸ See the remarks in Sijpesteijn 2004 and Sijpesteijn 2005. According to the *Chronicon ad a.C. 1234*, while Muḥammad ibn Marwān was governor in Mesopotamia (685–710), 'the Christians were still the scribes, leaders and governors of the lands of the Arabs' (Chabot 1916: 294 [text] and Chabot 1937: 229 [trans.]).

was itself subject to change – or when it appeared in less predictable contexts. For instance, though it may still seem conceivable that the fiercely anti-Byzantine Monophysite patriarch Benjamin should have written his festal letters in Greek at the time of the Arab conquest,¹⁹ it is quite surprising to see Alexander II, also an anti-Chalcedonian patriarch, draw up his annual festal letter for 724 in Greek, at a time when Coptic had long become the official language of the patriarchate.²⁰ Setting the annual date of Easter had for centuries been the exclusive prerogative of the Alexandrian patriarchate, and festal letters were meant to announce this date to the other churches, which could in itself explain their use of Greek even at a late date. In this way, post-conquest Monophysite patriarchs could symbolically lay claim to some sort of Christian universality and affirm institutional continuity with their pre-Chalcedonian predecessors.

The presence of Greek protocols and subscriptions in the Theban legal documents is perhaps more significant in this respect. These were private acts, not administrative documents. Many of them were written over a century after the conquest, in a non-urban context and in a region where Coptic had been the dominant language already in Byzantine times, even in official documents. For instance, although the will of bishop Abraham, the first abbot of St Phoibammon, drawn up around 610, was in Greek,²¹ that of his successor, dated 4 December 634, was bilingual.²² Bishop Abraham's own correspondence in the late sixth and early seventh century is entirely in Coptic. Of course, legal formulae tend to be repeated indefinitely even when, for their users, they have become empty, routine expressions. In general, however, most of the eighth-century Theban documents have the usual Greek formulae translated into Coptic, which may be the result of some form of anti-Hellenism, just as it may simply mean that the individuals involved in the transactions wished to understand them more thoroughly. Whatever the case (and the two are not mutually exclusive), this makes the ones that have kept the formulae in Greek stand out, and this deviation from the norm can arguably be interpreted as meaningful. It also means that these passages did not simply function as set phrases, but still carried some meaning.

Use of Greek often went hand in hand with the continuing use of late Roman honorifics and titles, and even with their transfer to Arab

¹⁹ *P. Köln* V 215 (*CPG* 7940, 3); extracts of two others (*CPG* 7940, 1 and 2) are quoted in a florilegium on Lent appended to one of John of Damascus's letters; see Müller 1968: 32 (extracts from letters 30 of 656 and 31 of 657).

²⁰ MacCoull 1990. ²¹ *P.Lond.* 1.77 (p. 231); see Krause 1969: 58–60.

²² *P.KRU* 77 = *SB* I 4319; see Krause 1969: 60–2 and Bagnall and Worp 1979: 72–3.

officials.²³ Several documents from the decades following the Arab conquest show the practice was common throughout Egypt. In Hermopolis (al-Ashmūneyn), the pagarch Athanasios in the middle of the seventh century was ἰλλούστριος and ἐνδοξότατος, and he called the *amīr* εὐκλεέστατος.²⁴ In the first half of the eighth century, Rashīd ibn Khālid (ΡΑΨΙΔ ΠΩΕ ΧΑΛΕΔ), *amīr* of Herakleopolis and Hermopolis, was also called εὐκλεέστατος in a Coptic dispute settlement,²⁵ and so was the *amīr* of Hermopolis Abū Sahl (ΑΒΟΥ ΣΑΛΛ), also in the eighth century.²⁶ Although to some extent this may be attributed to linguistic inertia, in fact things are probably not so simple. As these examples show, other terms such as *amīr* were quite readily adopted,²⁷ even in the case of officials who, though they bore Arab names, were perhaps neither Arabs nor Muslims, such as the aforementioned Abū Sahl, who was ‘the son of the blessed Shenoute’ (ΠΩΕ ΝΤΙΜΑΚ(ΑΡΙΟΣ) ΨΕΝΟΥΤΕ), a Christian name, and thus at most a convert – or the father of a convert.

For the provincial governor, who was the highest official in the country, a new Greek term was coined, namely σύμβουλος, which could stem from an attempt to Hellenise ‘consul’,²⁸ since it went with the honorifics that had formerly qualified consuls, namely πανεύφημος and ὑπερφυέστατος (*excellentissimus*). Thus in the early eighth-century Coptic papyri from Aphrodito, the governor Qurra ibn Sharik is addressed as ‘Our most praiseworthy lord Qurra, the most marvellous governor’ (ΠΝΞΟΕΙΣ ΠΑΝΕΥΦΗΜΟΣ ΚΟΡΡΑ <Υ>ΠΕΡΦΥΕΣΤΑΤΟΣ ΝΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΟΣ).²⁹

²³ On the use and evolution of honorifics Hornickel 1930 remains unreplaced.

²⁴ *CPR* XXII 2, 6 and *CPR* XXII 1, 1 and 14; see also p. 21, n. 1 on the use of honorifics in the early Arab period. The meaning of *amīr* here is unclear, since it is commonly used to refer to the pagarch; see note 27 below.

²⁵ *CPR* IV 51; on the archive of texts concerning Rashīd and on his actual position see Worp, 1984: 100–1.

²⁶ *PRyl. Copt.* 199, an acknowledgement of debt.

²⁷ In Coptic and Greek documents, *amīr* (ἀμῖρς, ΑΜΙΡΑ) is commonly used for the pagarch; for the same official, Arabic documents use *ṣāhib*, while *amīr* is there used for various higher officials: see Sijpesteijn 2004: 73–80; also Grohmann 1964.

²⁸ This term was by no means confined to Egypt, and can even be found in Byzantine sources such as Theophanes, where it refers to the councillors surrounding the caliph Mu‘āwīya (*Chron.* AM 6169, De Boor 355). The caliph himself is styled ὁ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν πρωτοσύμβουλος (*Chron.* AM 6171, De Boor 356 and *passim*), a term also found in documents, for instance *CPR* VIII 82, 5: οὐσία τοῦ πρωτοσυμβούλου (the caliphal estate). Σύμβουλος is also found with the meaning of provincial governor in an inscription from Gadara in Palestine; see Di Segni 1997: 237–40, no. 54 and fig. 50 (5 Dec. 662). In late seventh-century papyri from Nessana, however, the term is used to refer to the governor of the district (*kura*), who was equivalent to the pagarch: *P. Nessana* III 58, 10; 72, 1; 73, 1; 75, 3; 158, 3 (in the last two documents, the σύμβουλος is also ἐνδοξότατος).

²⁹ *P.Lond.* IV 1494, II 6–7 (early eighth century).

These honorifics, and even lesser ones, remained in use for quite a long time, and can still be found in the Theban legal documents in the second half of the eighth century, though often with devalued status. A term such as λαμπρότατος (*clarissimus*), initially reserved to members of the senatorial order, is here given to the διοικητής, a rather lowly official specifically attached to the town of Jême.³⁰ As for εὐκλεέστατος, which in late Roman times was applied to the *dux* or regional army commander, it is here used for the pagarch, who was the governor of the district, by this time an Arab.³¹ The διοικητής is also called εὐδοκιμώτατος³² and τιμώτατος (presumably either *honorabilis* or *honestus*),³³ while ἐνδοξότατος (*gloriosissimus*), once a title for high-ranking officials, is also applied to him,³⁴ as well as to the pagarch.³⁵ Even important people without official positions are found to use honorifics, such as the λαμπρότατος Papnouthios, son of Stephanos, a party in a 760 sale contract.³⁶ The last term was evidently much appreciated,³⁷ and it was even translated into Coptic, which implies it was still a meaningful term rather than an empty box. This is also indicated by the fact that, although they now embraced a much larger range of worthies, these honorifics seem on the whole to have retained their relative value, so that the highest were still given to the most important officials.³⁸

What could bear even more weight in this respect is the totally gratuitous use in the Arab period of the classy Roman gentilicium 'Flavius' before the names of the same officials. As James Keenan has shown, as early as the fifth and sixth centuries, the names Flavius and Aurelius

³⁰ PKRU 106, 6–7: λαμπροτάτου διοικ(η)τ(οῦ) ἀπὸ Κάστρου Μεμνωίνω(ν); see also PKRU 11, 3; 14, 4; 15, 4; 41, 5; 70, 4–5 and 94, 1: διοικητής Κάστρου Μεμνωίνων, and PKRU 1, 8 and 39, 14: ΔΙΟΙΚΗΤΗΣ ΜΠΚΛΑΤΡΟΝ ΝΣΗΜΕ. On the office under Arab rule see Steinwenter 1920: 19–25; for the Roman period, see Hagedorn 1985: 167–210. Other occurrences of λαμπρότατος in PKRU 1, 6; 4, 3; 10, 3; 20, 10; 21, 8; 22, 28; and 84, 2.

³¹ PKRU 106, 5–6: ἐπὶ Μαμέτ ἀμρᾶ, εὐκλε(ε)στάτου ἀμρᾶ τῆς παραρχίας Ἐρμόνθεος; see also PKRU 8, 4; 10, 7–8; 12, 3; 13, 3; 25, 16; 30, 3; 47, 12; 50, 3; 52, 6 and 70, 3.

³² PKRU 43, 10.

³³ PKRU 70, 4. The title was normally used for the two *lashane* (town magistrates, the rough equivalent of πρωτοκωμήτης): PKRU 23, 26; 35, 7; 36, 16, 22, 34; 37, 13; 38, 7; 50, 14; 68, 105; 69, 4; 71, 3; 74, 4; 105, 25; and 122, 3.

³⁴ PKRU 39, 14; 41, 21, 30; 43, 17 and 86, 10.

³⁵ PKRU 25, 15; 42, 7–9 and 45, 3. The devaluation of honorifics is a long-term phenomenon, and had started well before the Arab conquest. In some rare cases, *gloriosissimus* can be found applied to the pagarch as early as the sixth century, e.g. CPR XIV 11, 6; PLond. V 1666, 4.

³⁶ CPR IV 26, 28.

³⁷ A 701 mosaic inscription in a church at Aristobulias, today Khirbet Istabal, mentions Samuel λαμπρότατος as one of the authorities under whom the paving was done. Like Papnouthios, Samuel does not seem to have had an official position; see Di Segni 2003: 252–3.

³⁸ On similar phenomena in Italy, see Brown 1984: 138–42.

had started losing their quality as gentilicia to become status designations, of which the former was clearly more elevated than the latter.³⁹ This seems once again to have worked well into the early Islamic period. Towards the end of the seventh century, the pagarch of Herakleopolis (Ihnās) Kosmas still bore the name Flavius: Φλ(άουιος) Κοσμᾶς σὺν θ(εῶ) πάγαρχ(ος) Ἡρ(ακλέους) π(όλεως) – (Fl. Kosmas, with God's will pagarch of the city of Hercules).⁴⁰ Around 730, in a number of sale contracts the Christian διοικητῆς is called Flavius Kollouthos, son of Arsenios, and the name of the person holding the same office in 756 is Flavius Komes, son of Chael.⁴¹ Like the honorifics, this civility was extended to Arab officials. Two agreements on property dated 739 and 740 mention 'Flavius Sahl, son of 'Abd Allāh' (ἐπὶ Φλ(αουίου) Σααλ υἱοῦ Αβδελλα),⁴² and ten years later, a will gives the name of the *amīr* as 'Flavius Joseph, son of 'Ubayd' (Φλαύ(ιος) Ἰωσήφ υἱ(ὸς) Αβειδ).⁴³ Needless to say, outside the late Roman system, the gentilicia could only have symbolic value, especially when bestowed upon Muslim officials.⁴⁴

These observations can be combined with similar evidence from other fields, which tends to go the same way and thus to reinforce the impression that Greco-Roman values still enjoyed some prestige among Egyptian Christians. Dating formulae, for instance, generally gave the day of the month and the indiction year, followed by the name or names of the village or district officials. A number of documents, all in Greek, include the date by what is known as the Era of Diocletian.⁴⁵ The most elaborate of the four, dated 31 May 735, runs as follows:⁴⁶

³⁹ Keenan 1973: 33–63; Keenan 1974: 283–304; Keenan 1983: 245–50.

⁴⁰ *CPR* XXII 14, 1. See also the pagarch of Herakleopolis Flavius Menas mentioned in a document of 687/8 or 702/3; Gonis and Morelli 2000: 193–5.

⁴¹ *PKRU* 6, 3; 11, 3; 14, 4; 15, 4; and 41, 4 (Fl. Komes); *PKRU* 27, 3 (Fl. Kollouthos), adding the Greek Κύριος before the name: Φλ(αυίου) Κυρίου Κολλούθ(ου) Ἀρσ(ενίου).

⁴² *PKRU* 45, 3 (24 April 740); see also *PKRU* 50, 3 (22 August 739), without the name of the father.

⁴³ *PKRU* 70, 3 (4 July 750).

⁴⁴ The suggestion has been made that its use could indicate converted aristocrats; see Gonis and Morelli 2000: 194. However, their Muslim patronyms mean they would be at least second-generation converts, in which case it is significant that they should retain the *gentilicium*.

⁴⁵ These are *PKRU* 14, 2–5 and 15, 2–5 (both dated 756), *PKRU* 70, 2–5 (749/50), *PKRU* 106, 4–9 (734/5), and perhaps *PKRU* 100 (A. Diocl. 529 = 812/13?)

⁴⁶ *PKRU* 106, 4–9. The dating by the Era of Diocletian in this document does not correspond with AH 114, which should read 117. Till 1962: 39 assumes that the former is right, and that 114 is a scribal mistake, presumably because the document is written by Christians and because that date also agrees with the indiction. This could however just as well have been misread by the editor, since Δ and Ζ are quite easily confused, especially in the type of late majuscule used for numerals (I am grateful to Roger Bagnall for discussing this with me). In the absence of an accessible photograph of the papyrus I have refrained from correcting the date to ριζ'.

ἐγγράφη μενὶ παῦνι σ' ἰνδ(ικτίωνος) τρίτη(ς), ἐπὶ Μαμετ ἀμιρά, εὐκλ
(εεστάτου) ἀμιρά τῆς παραρχίας Ἐρμούθεος καὶ Χαῖλ υἱὸς Ψμο λαμ-
πρότατου διοικ(η)τ(οῦ) ἀπὸ Κάστρον Μემνωνίω(ν), ἔτους Διοκλη(τιανοῦ)
βασιλεὺς υνα' καὶ ἔτους Σαρακουιν ριδ' ++ +

Written on 6 Pauni of the third indiction, under Muḥammad the *amīr*, the glorious *amīr* of the district of Hermonthis and Chael, son of Psmo, the *clarissimus dioiketes* from the Kastron Memnonion, in the year 451 of Diocletian the emperor, and the year 114 of the Saracens.

This Era of Diocletian – starting at that emperor's accession in 284 – first appeared in Egypt at the end of the fourth century, when it was limited to horoscopes and private inscriptions such as epitaphs and graffiti. It only started being used in documentary texts after the Arab conquest, first in the Fayyūm and, from the eighth century onwards, also in Upper Egypt.⁴⁷ Roger Bagnall and Klaas Worp recently suggested that its slow generalisation ‘may have arisen from the desire of Christian Egyptians for a means of reckoning more continuous than the indiction but other than the Saracene era’,⁴⁸ implying that the Christian communities may have wished to retain a link with the Christian empire through a form of post-regnal dating. As dating systems are naturally conservative, taking up an existing era – even that of the persecutor Diocletian – was the most expedient option.

Dates were probably the domain where Greco-Roman mannerism resisted best. The Era of Diocletian remained common until the eleventh century, and can even be found until the mid-fourteenth century, alongside the Era of the Martyrs, which was gradually to become the ‘official’ era of the medieval Coptic Church. Diocletian, however, was not the only possible link with the Roman past. Still in the early twelfth century, a scribe who copied the four Gospels for the White Monastery near Akhmīm wrote the date on his manuscript's colophon in Greek, even mentioning the Roman month of April – an extremely rare occurrence – and the Byzantine *anno mundi* next to the more predictable Egyptian month of Parmoute (March–April), the Era of the Martyrs and the Era of the Saracens.⁴⁹

It is also noteworthy that in the text quoted above Diocletian is called *basileus*, a rather uncommon epithet in dating formulae. Evidently the office still retained a certain legitimacy for the person who drew up the

⁴⁷ Bagnall and Worp 2003: 63–87, with a list of the sources bearing a date by that era, 68–82; MacCoull and Worp 1990.

⁴⁸ Bagnall and Worp 2003: 64.

⁴⁹ *P.Lond. Copt.* 489 = BM Or. 3581B(69); van Lantschoot 1929: 133–7, no. LXXX.

document. This symbolic importance of the emperor can also be found elsewhere in Egypt after the Arab conquest. A late seventh- or early eighth-century epitaph from the monastic site at Kellia in Lower Egypt, for instance, mentions in its dating formula 'the reign of Justinian the emperor' – Justinian II (685–95 and 705–11) according to the archaeological context.⁵⁰

A limited number of oaths by the 'salvation' or the 'victory' of the emperors also appear in documents from the years immediately after the Arab conquest. In 645, for instance, a document from Aphrodito contains the formula 'the almighty God and the victory of imperial salvation' (τόν τε παντοκράτορα Θεὸν καὶ τὴν νίκην τῆς βασιλικῆς σωτηρίας),⁵¹ and in 647, the oath in a property settlement deed drawn up in Edfū (Apollōnos Anō) was taken 'by the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity and the imperial salvation' (τὴν ἁγίαν καὶ ὁμοούσιον τριάδα καὶ τὴν βασιλικὴν σωτηρίαν).⁵² A more ambiguous oath formula, attested in Oxyrhynchos as early as 644/5, referred in some way to 'any authority that has power over us',⁵³ which paid allegiance to the Arab authorities without entirely excluding the idea that things could still change, contrary to another oath formula found in Hermopolite documents of the later seventh century, which plainly mentioned 'the salvation of our Lords the Emirs' (τὴν σωτηρίαν τῶν δεσποτῶν ἡμῶν τῶν Ἀμυράτων).⁵⁴ A century later, some Theban documents still mention 'the salvation of our Lords, that now govern us *on God's orders*', a phrase that may allude to the very common Christian interpretation of the Muslim conquest as a punishment from above, and thus still betray some attachment to the previous situation.⁵⁵

Some of the Jēme legal documents also refer in one way or another to 'the laws' they were supposed to be applying. In several donation deeds concerning children who were given as slaves to a monastery by their parents, the 'imperial laws' or the 'imperial order' (τάξις) are invoked to justify the parents' right to act as they did; they are twice paired with the 'divine laws' (θεϊκοὶ νόμοι).⁵⁶ It is not easy to determine the meaning of

⁵⁰ Partyka and Kasser 1994: 448–9, no. 303.

⁵¹ *P.Mich.* XIII 662, 12; see Bagnall and Worp 2003: 106 for the date.

⁵² *SB* VI 8988, 79. ⁵³ *SB* VI 8987, 39.

⁵⁴ See Bagnall and Worp 2003: 289, and the remarks in Gasco 1999: 20. This 'acceptance' of Muslim rule naturally becomes more common in later documents: see for instance *PKRU* 21, 78–80 (12 June 725); 35, 71–4 (6 Oct. 719); 66, 17–19 and 76, 10–12 (first half of eighth century).

⁵⁵ *PKRU* 10, 28–9 (8 Dec. 722) and 74, 30–3 (28 Dec. 733 or 748). On the theme of God's wrath see Hoyland *Islam*: 524–6.

⁵⁶ *PKRU* 85, 27–8: ΝΒΑCΙΛΕΙΚΩΝ ΔΥΩ ΘΕΕΤΙΚΩΝ; *PKRU* 87, 3: ΝΝΟΜΟC ΝΒΑCΙΛΕΟΝ; *PKRU* 94, 10–11: ΝΝΟΜΟC ΒΑCΙΛΙΚΟΝ; *PKRU* 98, 19–20: ΝΝΟΜΟC ΝΘΕΕΙΚΩΝ ΔΥΩ

the term 'divine', since it could refer to the emperor as well as to a form of canon law. The latter hypothesis would, of course, correspond to the legislative reality of Christian communities in the Islamic world, and it is rather striking that the notaries did not leave it at that, but felt the need to add a reference to the 'imperial' laws – those of the neighbouring Christian empire.⁵⁷ However one can not exclude the former possibility, namely that 'divine' also meant 'imperial', the two expressions being perhaps redundant, but clearly referring to Byzantine civil law. Of course, donating children as slaves to a monastery was in patent contradiction to Byzantine imperial legislation. This, however, does not diminish the symbolic value these laws retained in the eyes of those who invoked them: it indicates rather that the very mention of imperial law was enough to confer legitimacy on the practice, especially at a time when the possibility of checking Justinian's *Code* was quite remote.⁵⁸

Greek forms also lingered in the case of city names, although an alternative toponymy in Coptic and Arabic was commonly used. Again, although this may have been natural at first, with time it became more conspicuous. In the Theban documents, the town most often mentioned is Jēme, which was built inside and around the ruins of the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu.⁵⁹ It is called the **ΚΑΣΤΡΟΝ ΝΞΗΜΕ** in Coptic, although it never had any military connection. The Greek protocols and subscriptions even call it **Κάστρον ΜΕμνωνίων**, a name that goes back to the early Roman period. Other Egyptian cities are also given their Greek names: Diospolis, Laton Polis, Kontra Laton, Tria Kastrā, Antinoou.⁶⁰ A witness signing in Greek around 700 went so far as to use not the usual Greek name of his city, but the honorific imperial name that had been given it by Justinian and was in official use only for a rather short time, namely 'the city of Justinian in Lower Egypt' (τῆς Ἰουστινιανῆς πόλεως τῆς Κάτω Χώρας), probably Kynopolis in the

ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΩΝ and **ΤΕΥΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ ΤΑΞΙΣ**; *PKRU* 99, 20: **ΝΝΟΜΟC ΝΘΙΕΚΩΝ ΚΕΛΕΥΕ**
ΖΝΤΕΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ ΤΑΞΙC ΞΕΔΑΓΤΕΙ.

⁵⁷ The expression **θεῖος νόμος** was used before the conquest, probably referring to God's law: see Arangio-Ruiz 1920: 28–9.

⁵⁸ In fact, the justification sought in the laws is 'that it is possible for everyone to be master of that which belongs to him', which equates children with any other kind of property and does not refer to the specific laws concerning parents' rights and obligations; see for instance *Cod. Just.* 4.43, and more generally, Kaser 1975: 205–6.

⁵⁹ For a general introduction to the western Theban region see Wilfong 1989 and, with more recent bibliography, Wilfong 2002: 1–22.

⁶⁰ *PKRU* 45, 3 (24 April 740); *PKRU* 50, 3 (22 August 739); *PKRU* 70, 3 (4 July 750); *PKRU* 10, 7 (8 Dec. 722).

nome of Busiris in the Delta.⁶¹ Greek names can be found until much later still: thus the aforementioned twelfth-century copyist who used Roman months for his dating also called Akhmīm 'the Christ-loving city of Pan' (Πόλις Πανός).⁶²

Perhaps the most interesting field for our purpose is that of onomastics. A close examination of the Jēme documents shows that the group of *nomikoi* favouring Greek protocols and subscriptions was relatively small. These were David son of Psate, Psate son of David, Senouthios son of Shemntsneu, Souhai son of Philotheos, Aristophanes son of John, Polykrates son of John, Job son of Alexandros, Psate son of Pisrael, the deacon Papas son of Kleonikos, the priest Elisaïos and two monks, Zacharias and Apa Apater. One cannot but be struck by some of the names mentioned in this list. The relative density of 'high' Hellenic names within the scribes' families – Alexandros, Aristophanes, Polykrates, Kleonikos – may of course partly be explained by the fact that *nomikoi* were part of the educated elite, and continued a tradition that was theirs before the conquest. In early seventh-century Hermopolis, for instance, the city's upper crust bore names such as Salloustios, Helladios, Polydeukes, Olympodoros, Hermogenes or Aristophanes.⁶³

The Theban west bank, however, was no Hermopolis. Before the conquest, what we know of Theban onomastics shows they were considerably less marked by such eccentricities. One may object that the bulk of Theban evidence for the first half of the seventh century comes from a very different type of archive, namely the 'professional' correspondence of the Monophysite bishop of Hermonthis, Abraham.⁶⁴ Most of the individuals mentioned there are either members of the clergy or people seeking the bishop's help, while those in the eighth-century legal documents mostly belonged to the propertied strata of local society. It is not easy to know what naming patterns we might have found in a comparable group of private contracts and wills. It is noteworthy however that in the late seventh and

⁶¹ *P.CLT* 5, 159; see Crum and Winlock 1926: 256, n. 11 and 104, n. 1. Crum identifies the city as Koptos/Keft/Qift, which had been Ioustinianoupolis for a short period, and expresses some surprise at the fact that the expression Κάτω Χώρα (Lower Egypt) had come to describe even a region so far south. It is perhaps more expedient to identify Ioustinianoupolis with a northern city, either Oxyrhynchos, which bore the name 'city of Justinian' with much pride in the sixth century, or, even more consistent with the location in Lower Egypt, Kynopolis of the Busirite nome: see Fournet 2002: 56.

⁶² *P.Lond.Copt.* 489 = Van Lantschoot, no. LXXX, lines 79–80: ΠΡΜΤΠΟΛ(ΙC) ΜΜΑΙ ΠΕΞC ΠΑΝΟC; see also line 56: ΝΕΠΙCΚΟΠΟC ΕΤΠΟΛΙC ΠΑΝΟC.

⁶³ *P.Sorb.* II 69, 105 D1; 69 B5; 127 C1; 123 B1; 42 B5; 101 B3 respectively; see also 53–4.

⁶⁴ The texts are put together by Krause in his unpublished doctoral thesis (Krause 1956). The majority of the texts had been published in 1902 in *O.Crum*.

especially in the eighth century, Greco-Roman names had become quite common, even in documents that were not legal, and were thus more representative of society as a whole. The majority were Greek names, such as Andronikos, Asklepios, Athenodoros, Herakleios, Ioannakios, Nikomachos, Olymbrios, Pelagios, Pergamios, Rhodakios, Stephanakios, Antheria, Archontia, Charisia, Martyria, Sophia, Thesauria.⁶⁵ One also finds some Latin imperial names, such as Konstantinos or Pulkeria,⁶⁶ as well as Roman institutions transformed into proper names, such as Illoustre, Tribounos, Hypatos, Romaïos, Praipositos, Prinkipos or Komes.⁶⁷

This, of course, was not a purely Theban phenomenon. Late seventh- and early eighth-century documents from Aphrodito show that names with strong Greek or Roman flavour such as Euphemia, Archontia, Heraklios, Klaudios, Konstantinos, Oualentios or Philotim(i)os were also in use there. In the eighth century, one still finds Ptolemaïos or Konstantinos, and even Aurelios Kyriakos in Bawīt,⁶⁸ Anthimos or Staurakios in the Fayyūm,⁶⁹ Aristoboulos, Aristophanes, Achileus, Helladios, Ioustinos or Philostorgios in Edfū,⁷⁰ Achillites, Konstantinos, Diomedes or Magister in Balā'izah,⁷¹ as well as Euprepios and Eustochios in documents of uncertain provenance.⁷² To this one may add that the tendency to Hellenise Egyptian names, common in Greek-speaking Egypt from the very start, also continued well into the Arab period. In some Greek documents of the late seventh and the eighth centuries, one thus finds Παχύμιος for ΠΑΖΟΜΕ, Σεινούθιος for ΨΕΝΟΥΤΕ, Ὀνόφρις for ΟΥΑΝΟΦΡΕ, Ἀτρήης for ΖΑΤΡΕ and the like, even while in others the original Coptic forms have prevailed.

Egyptian naming patterns had a strong local flavour, to the point that scholars today feel quite secure in assigning a provenance to a document on the basis of its onomastics alone.⁷³ Names would have provided a

⁶⁵ Andronikos: *O. CrumST* 254; Asklepios, Sophia: *O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 40; Athenodoros: *O. CrumST* 143; Nikomachos: *O. CrumST* 50; Olymbrios: *O. CrumST* 260; Charisia: *O. CrumST* 191; Herakleios: *O. Vind. Copt.* 442; Ioannakios: *P.KRU* 67; 96; 107; Pelagios: *O. CrumST* 91; Pergamios: *P. Mon. Epiph.* 269; Stephanakios: *P.KRU* 120; Rhodakios: *P. Mon. Epiph.* 435; Martyria: *P.KRU* 34, *O. CrumST* 424; Thesauria: *P.KRU* 28; Antheria: *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* I 51/3 (p. 68); Archontia: *P.KRU* 4.

⁶⁶ Konstantinos: *O. Vind. Copt.* 316, *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* I 84/4 (p. 122); Pulkeria: *O. CrumST* 169.

⁶⁷ Illoustre: *O. Vind. Copt.* 165; Tribounos: *BKU* 73, *O. Crum* 373; Hypatos: *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* I 84/4 (p. 122); Romaïos: *P. Mon. Epiph.* 182; Praipositos: *P. Mon. Epiph.* 311, *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* I 85/2 (p. 123); Prinkipos: *O. CrumST* 91. Komes is an extremely common name: see Till 1962: 121–3.

⁶⁸ *P. Mon. Apollo* 48, 7; 43; 3; 48, 5. ⁶⁹ *CPR* XXII 18, 16 (761); 18, 17 (761).

⁷⁰ *P. Apoll.* 76B, 4; II, 6; 68, 13; 80, 6; 9, 16; II, 9; 51, 5; 92B, 5.

⁷¹ *P. Bal.* 135; 290, 6; 292; 293, 5; 188, 19; 301, 9; 293, 5; 295, 4; 377.

⁷² *CPR* XXII 38, 3 and 60, 30.

⁷³ This was also true in other Near Eastern regions; see e.g. the tables showing the geographical distribution of Nabatean names in Negev 1991: 73–9, and the summary, 2.

sense of local identity, and also set a norm from which one could not easily depart unnoticed, as in most traditional societies. The names singled out here marked a clear difference with mainstream onomastics in those areas. Next to the traditional local names, these were usually dominated throughout the seventh and eighth centuries by names from the Old Testament, which had the advantage of being totally neutral, even with respect to Islam. The New Testament was the next source, followed by the martyrs and a few monks. Thus in Theban district, the most common Old Testament names were Abraham, Isaac, Samuel, Moyses, Jacob, Aaron, Jeremias, David, Daniel and Solomon; from the New Testament came Petros, Markos, Matthaïos, Maria and Stephanos, while popular martyrs' names were Phoibammon, Kyriakos, Victor, Georgios, Kollouthos and Menas, and monastic ones were limited to Pesynte and Onophrios. Names such as Kleonikos, Polykrates or Athenodoros clearly stood out, and it is difficult not to see them as the expression of some form of allegiance. Naming is always a potent statement of identity, especially in small communities or in the context of minority groups.⁷⁴ Here, mainstream Christian names would have been the most obvious – and the most common – choice, and would also have been culturally neutral. On the other hand, ancient Greek or Latin names were rare, and they could only indicate a limited interest for the culture that went with them.

What can make such accumulation of scattered evidence compelling is the fact that the various elements often combine quite consistently. I will here take the example of one of the Theban *nomikoi*, Aristophanes, son of John.⁷⁵ He evidently came from a well-to-do family, and in the 740s and 750s he owned both a house and land. He was active at least from 723 to 756, and drew up a great number of documents that we still possess, among them several deeds on papyrus and shorter texts on ostraka, and he sometimes also signed as a witness. Aristophanes invariably signed his documents in Greek, and in the legal documents he also wrote the protocols and introductions in Greek. Several tax receipts written entirely in Greek are also in his hand.⁷⁶ He always used 'Flavius' and never forgot the honorifics, as if he were still in the Roman Empire. However, he was

⁷⁴ On the significance of 'deviant' naming practices see Herzfeld 1982. More generally on the social relevance of personal names see Alford 1988 and Lieberman 1984.

⁷⁵ On Aristophanes, see Till 1962: 61–2.

⁷⁶ Crum and Winlock 1926: 256, n. 14 = Louvre, ostr. E 6262; *O.Petr.* 468; Worp 1986: 144–6, no. 17 (= *SB XIX* 14037); and Chrysi Kotsifou informs me that she is in the process of publishing one such receipt from the ostraka collections of the Catholic University of America, and that photographs of three more are among the papers of Nathaniel Reich at the Center for Advanced Jewish Studies in Philadelphia, but their current location is unknown.

almost certainly born after 700, of parents who were themselves born after the conquest. He may have had a younger brother in the same business, since we know of a certain Polykrates, also son of John, who drew up a document around 770, fourteen years after the last dated text by Aristophanes. Even if the two were not brothers, that second-generation *dhimmī* families should choose such names for their children in the first half of the eighth century was unusual enough for it not to be thought the repetition of a meaningless tradition, but rather the result of some form of choice. It is certainly not without significance that it was precisely Aristophanes who wrote the most sophisticated 'Greek' documents, thus taking up for himself his parents' statement of identity and even transforming it, if one may so put it, into an act of allegiance to the Roman – or Christian – Empire.

Some of the documents quoted above were drawn up by people who were born before or just after the Arab conquest, and it is not surprising that they did not immediately change their attitudes. Most of them also came from cities, where both the Greek language and late Roman institutions had been quite deeply entrenched. For our purpose, the interest of the Jēme documents lies above all in their date and origin, and the coherence with which they combine all the above elements. Living far from Alexandria in a region that had known several uprisings against Roman rule, this Coptic-speaking, anti-Chalcedonian community whose life was intimately linked with that of the (locally at least) powerful monastery of St Phoibammon could hardly be more typical of what the learned tradition depicts as the 'indigenous', Rome-hating Copts. Still in the second half of the eighth century, however, the documents they produced point to the persistence among them of the east Roman – or Byzantine – model. Even though this may not exactly be, to paraphrase Peter Brown, 'a statement of classical values which we do not expect to hear from inhabitants of Upper Egypt in the age just before Charlemagne',⁷⁷ Walter Crum's dismissal of the practice of the *nomikoi* who wrote in Greek as 'affectation' is perhaps a little too hasty.⁷⁸

Of course, these practices mainly took place among a non-representative elite group. One may ask, therefore, what is the relevance of the cultural choices of such a group for the community as a whole? Can we infer that adherence to the Greco-Roman model was prevalent among ordinary

⁷⁷ Brown 2003: 312, concerning a statement by Anthony of Tagrit on the quality of Greek learning. The original text has, 'It is a statement of classical values which we do not expect to hear from an inhabitant of Mesopotamia in the age of Charlemagne.'

⁷⁸ Crum and Winlock 1926: 256.

Thebans? Or was it just an internal game among the cultivated elites? As always, the common man's attitude and feelings will remain out of our reach. One can hardly imagine, however, that the fancies of the town elite worked within a totally closed circuit. The very possibility of such a pose does imply that Greco-Roman culture and the Byzantine Empire that now carried it still enjoyed a certain level of prestige, sufficiently recognised by those who were excluded for it to function as a status symbol. Certainly the dynamics of social domination also played a role in the adoption of such attitudes, as they had in late Roman times.⁷⁹ What the documentary evidence tells us is also certainly more representative, even if it only concerned the elites, than what we can make out from other sources, which are mainly the vehicles of ecclesiastical discourse. It is also quite clear that this attraction for Byzantine forms did not stem from institutional links with the Empire, such as a Chalcedonian community might have had. Among the notaries writing in Greek were some members of the clergy and some monks, all from non-Chalcedonian institutions, showing that even in those circles, the radical anti-Greek discourse of what was becoming the Coptic church did not have the totalising effect it sought. The isolation of the Jēme community may of course in part explain its lingering Roman taste, and the fact that it probably took more time than urban societies to tune into the new system of values that gradually became prevalent in important cities – a system structured around the Coptic church elites and their 'nativist' discourse. Lingering *Romanitas*, however, was also to be found in cities and, as we have seen with the 724 festal letter, even at the heart of the Coptic patriarchate.

In the 1960s, John Meyendorff wrote that his impression from reading John of Damascus was 'that of John living in a Christian ghetto which preserves intact the Byzantine political and historical outlook', praying for 'the victory of the emperor over his enemies', and being more interested in the 'iconoclastic heresy' than in the 'beliefs of the Arab conquerors'. Meyendorff concluded, 'In mind and heart John still lives in Byzantium.'⁸⁰ This view of John of Damascus living 'in a Christian ghetto' is of course misleading, considering that at the time, Christians were still the majority of the population and, as mentioned above, still held important positions within the Muslim administration – which, by the

⁷⁹ See Herzfeld 1982: 290, who argues that exceptional naming practices will only function within a given system, and that rules are 'something that people actively manipulate to express their own position in the social world'. On the symbolic significance of the use of Greek in the west, see Berschin 1988: 18–32 and more generally, Goldhill 2002.

⁸⁰ Meyendorff 1964: 117–18.

way, was the case of John himself, as well as his father and grandfather before him.⁸¹ But there is much truth in the description of his relationship to Byzantium. John was a Chalcedonian who was quite naturally concerned about the fate of the Chalcedonian Church, which was the imperial Church and whose centre was Constantinople. This was not the case of contemporary Thebans, at least not those who were in the non-Chalcedonian network of St Phoibammon. Neither Aristophanes nor any of the others seemed at all interested in the iconoclastic 'heresy', which as far as they were concerned was nothing but a 'sub-heresy' anyway. Yet in some ways their situation resembled John's, in that they lived in a cut-off Christian world where the lost Christian empire seems to have retained its allure. They still inhabited its cities, referred to its laws, bore the names of its emperors, used its language as a sign of distinction and bestowed upon their new lords the honorific titles of their predecessors. Without overstating things, one might say that in mind and heart, Aristophanes and his friends still lived in Byzantium – in the Byzantium their great-grandfathers had known.

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⁸¹ The most critical and up-to-date presentation of John's biography is Conticello 2000.

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